

Climbing Wall Leading Award Handbook



For holders of the Climbing Wall or Single Pitch Awards who wish to instruct lead climbing skills on indoor or outdoor climbing walls and structures.



Mountain Leader Training Association

Developing and supporting climbing, walking and mountain leaders

What is MLTA?

MLTA is the membership organisation for climbing and walking leaders. It provides further training opportunities and networking and social events for members to keep in touch and up to date.

How can I join?

Membership is available to leaders who hold or are registered for an award. That means you can join now, to enjoy the support and benefits of MLTA membership.

Members include outdoor instructors, leaders of voluntary and school groups as well as people working through the awards for personal achievements.

Membership benefits

- *Let people find you for work- Freelance Instructor list*
- *Reduced premiums for professional liability insurance and other members' deals*
- *Develop your skills with further training opportunities*
- *Solve your problems with specialist support*
- *Keep in touch at networking and social events and through the web forum*

More information

MLTA is a web-based organisation - have a look around the website for more information. You will also find news, job opportunities and details of upcoming events.

Join now on the website: www.mlta.co.uk.

———— **www.mlta.co.uk** ————

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Preface

Nowadays it is common to begin rock climbing on artificial climbing walls and there are many regular climbers who rarely or never venture onto natural rock. The accessibility of walls and their relative safety often mean that such facilities are ideal for all climbers and are popular places to develop skills and experience. Artificial walls can allow a high level of performance to be developed and allow climbing to take place throughout the year.

The number of individuals who climb to a high technical standard and wish to learn to lead on artificial walls has risen dramatically over the years. Mountain Leader Training (MLT) and the home nation training boards wish to ensure that high standards of instruction are maintained so that enjoyment and safety are enhanced without compromising the sport or the participation of others. High standards are achieved through experience, personal qualities, training and validation.

Introducing climbers to leading is a serious undertaking. It involves the mechanics of safeguarding novice leaders from a fall as well as introducing them to the judgements and decision making related to leading.

This handbook provides advice to those involved in teaching the skills required to lead routes on artificial climbing walls and particularly for candidates working their way through the Climbing Wall Leading Award (CWLA). It is designed to support the knowledge and experience of candidates, trainers and assessors without prescribing methods. There are many technical manuals and books which will continue to illustrate evolving skills and techniques and these notes are designed to complement such literature.



Throughout the booklet particularly important information appears in boxes – take note!

Mountain Leader Training

Mountain Leader Training co-ordinates the management of nine leadership and instructional schemes for walking and climbing.

Six of these schemes, namely the:

- *Climbing Wall Award*
- *Climbing Wall Leading Award*
- *Single Pitch Award*
- *Walking Group Leader*
- *Mountain Leader*
- *Winter Mountain Leader*

are directly administered by the home nation training boards:

- *Mountain Leader Training England (MLTE)*
- *Mountain Leader Training Scotland (MLTS)*
- *Mountain Leader Training Wales (MLTW)*
- *Mountain Leader Training Northern Ireland (MLTNI)*

MLT directly administers three schemes, namely:

- *Mountaineering Instructor Award*
- *Mountaineering Instructor Certificate*
- *International Mountain Leader*

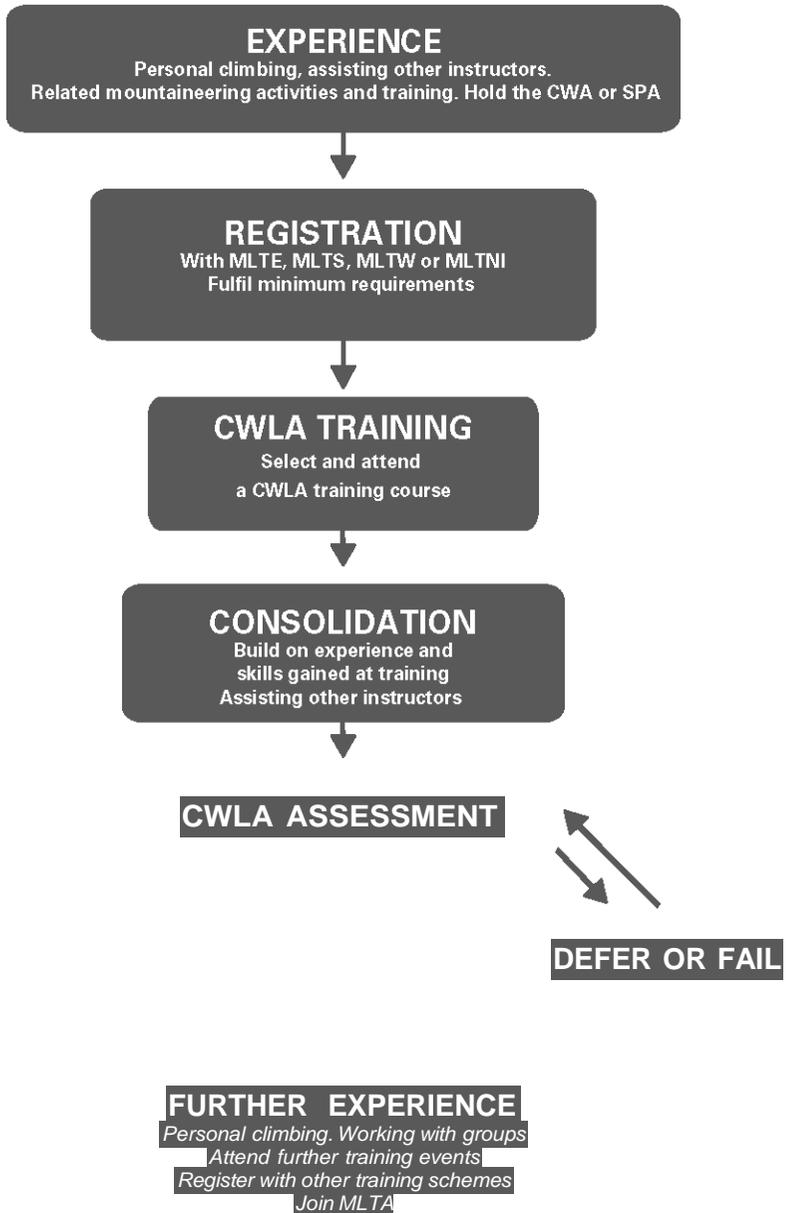
MLT also maintains a centralised national mountain training database of the records of all leaders and instructors who hold, or are progressing through, the various schemes.

The main aim of MLT and the home nation training boards is to promote awareness of mountain safety through their formal training schemes.

Participation Statement

MLT recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions. MLT has developed a range of training and assessment schemes and associated supporting literature to help leaders manage these risks and to enable new participants to have positive experiences while learning about their responsibilities.

Progression through the CWLA



Prospectus



Photo: dbm-photo.co.uk

1 Introduction

This document is divided into 4 sections:

- *A Prospectus that explains the way you progress through the CWLA from registration to assessment.*
- *A Syllabus that lists the skills required to teach / instruct others to lead routes on climbing walls.*
- *Guidance notes that help advise candidates of protocols and procedures, and also explain some training aims and indicate what assessors seek to ascertain.*
- *Appendices that provide background information.*

2 Remit

The CWLA has been designed to train and assess those who wish to teach lead climbing skills on indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls and structures with fixed protection. This includes a wide range of structures (including, for example towers and mobile climbing walls) which will be referred to throughout as 'walls'. These structures are deemed to have safety equipment, such as top anchors, in place and are maintained through a management regime. The award is concerned with ensuring good practice when developing leading skills. It covers the introduction, coaching and on-going development of the technical and movement skills required to lead routes.

Completion of a training course, without passing the assessment, should not be considered as a qualification in itself, although it may be of benefit to the trainee.

The award includes a measure of personal competence. However, it is not a personal proficiency programme and should not be used as either an entry requirement, or a measure of suitability for climbing on artificial walls.

The award is valid throughout the UK and wherever UK qualifications are recognised.

For the purposes of the CWLA, a climbing wall is:

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

The employer or organising authority must have appropriate management structures in place if they wish to employ CWLA holders for duties beyond the remit of the award.

The CWLA does not cover

- *the skills needed to climb and/or supervise others on natural crags and former quarries*
- *multi-pitch rock climbing skills*
- *the teaching or supervision of leading on outdoor crags*
- *the placing of non-fixed protection*
- *the use of high or low ropes courses*
- *the use of ice climbing walls including dry tooling*
- *the assessment of candidates' personal qualities*
- *a Criminal Records Bureau check*

If you are in doubt about a particular venue, consult a qualified Mountaineering Instructor (MIA or MIC) or British Mountain Guide (JiAGM). MLT and the home nation training board officers may also be consulted.

3 Stages in the CWLA

Progression through the award is as follows:

3a Pre-registration requirements

You should note that the figures given are absolute minimums and most successful candidates will have well in excess of the experience outlined.

To undertake the CWLA you must have a genuine interest in teaching the skills required to lead routes on artificial climbing walls.



Registration is only open to holders of either the Climbing Wall Award (CWA) or the Single Pitch Award (SPA). To register for the CWLA you must have led a minimum of 50 different routes on at least three different walls and have belayed a leader on a minimum of 50 climbs. At least half of those routes led must be at a grade of French 6a or above. You must also have logged 20 sessions as a CWA or SPA holder. Large major public walls must be visited.

3b Registration with a home nation training board.

Before attending a CWLA training course you must first register for the award with a home nation board (MLE, MLTS, MLTNI, or MLTW).

You must be over 18 years of age at the date of registration. When registering, candidates will be asked to verify that they meet the above minimum requirements.

On receipt of your registration form and appropriate fees you will be issued with a personal logbook and scheme handbook upon confirmation of experience.

3c Logbook

Experience gained by candidates should be recorded in their logbook. Entries should be concise and easily read and should include all climbing and other relevant experience. The logbook is divided into 5 sections that are similar to the other schemes administered by MLT. It is designed to help candidates demonstrate their experience to others. It should be filled in before the training course to enable the candidate and trainer to assess the candidate's particular needs for training, consolidation and route to assessment. Candidates should list a variety of experiences gained and mention notable sessions. This information does not need to be verified by a third party and may form the basis for discussion at training and assessment.

3d Training

Once registered, candidates may book onto a CWLA training course or apply for an exemption from training (see below). Training courses are delivered by approved providers (full list available from MLT) and will involve at least 8 hours contact time. Courses will be run with at least 2 and no more than 8 candidates. The minimum staffing ratio is 1 trainer to 4 candidates. The training course assumes competence as a climber, including experience of leading routes and belaying lead climbers, so some aspects of the course may not be covered during training; candidates are expected to make themselves aware of these elements. The Director of training will give verbal feedback to each candidate, including recommendations for the consolidation period, and will add appropriate written comments to the training course report page of the logbook. Candidates will be provided with an endorsement sticker for their logbook page with date of course and course provider number. The trainer will submit a report to their home nation training board within a limited time of the course end. If candidates have not presented their registration details by that time then their attendance on the training course will not be entered on the database. Candidates are encouraged to use the skills checklist provided in their logbook to evaluate their current skills and to plan, with their trainer, their route towards assessment.

3e Consolidation Period

Candidates may see new ideas and techniques during training and will often need time to practise and evaluate these before assessment. During this period candidates are encouraged to climb at as wide a range of venues as possible, both as an individual climber and when assisting other instructors in the teaching of lead climbing. All but the most experienced of candidates are recommended to allow a minimum of 3 months between training and assessment. There is currently no time limit on the validity of a training course.

3f Assessment

Before attending an assessment course candidates must have attended a training course or been granted exemption from training (see below), have gained further relevant experience and be proficient in the use of a wide variety of climbing walls.



In addition, candidates must have recorded a minimum of 100 different lead climbs at least half of which must be a grade of French 6a or above and have belayed a lead climber on at least 100 routes. Candidates must also have assisted or observed at least 5 teaching leading sessions delivered by a suitably qualified person..

A valid first aid certificate should also be held (see below).

During the assessment candidates will be tested in accordance with the syllabus. Assessments are delivered by approved providers and last for 6 hours. After assessment the Director of the course will endorse your logbook in 1 of 3 ways:

- **PASS:** where satisfactory knowledge and application of syllabus and the necessary experience, skills and attributes were demonstrated
- **DEFER:** where performance was generally up to standard but complete proficiency was not shown in some aspect/s of the syllabus. Some form of re-assessment will be required. When a relevant first aid certificate is not produced at assessment candidates will automatically be deferred until they can produce a current, acceptable first aid certificate
- **FAIL:** where the performance has been generally weak and/or the necessary experience and skills have not been shown. Further training may be recommended and another complete assessment will need to be taken

In all cases the result will be discussed with candidates and recorded in their logbook. Candidates who are deferred or failed will receive written feedback including an action plan. This will include reasons for the result, further recommendations and details of timing and format for re-assessment. Due to the short duration of the assessment course it is possible that a candidate who deferred on one element may be required to attend a re-assessment of the full 6 hours.

Candidates are asked to raise any concerns about the assessor's decision at the time of assessment wherever possible. If, on reflection, any part of the discussion or written report do not fit your impression of the assessment/your performance then contact the provider/director for additional clarification, in writing if necessary.

Although deferred candidates can be re-assessed by any CWLA provider, they are encouraged to return to their original provider. Practical re-assessments cannot take place within 3 months of the original assessment and all deferrals must be completed within 5 years of the original assessment. Two re-assessments are permitted before having to take the entire assessment again.

4 Exemption

Climbers may apply for exemption from attending a training course if they have substantial personal climbing experience and experience of supervising groups and assisting qualified instructors. There is no exemption from assessment.



Before applying for exemption, candidates should note that the training course is not a personal skills climbing course. The course introduces the skills necessary for the teaching of lead climbing on walls and might include material that is unfamiliar to even experienced climbers.

Candidates wishing to apply for exemption should register for the CWLA, complete an exemption form (available on request from the relevant home nation training board), then submit the form, exemption fee and completed logbook experience pages to the relevant board.

5 Equal Opportunities

MLT and the home nation boards are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all participants in climbing and mountaineering. Candidates, trainers and assessors should demonstrate a positive attitude towards equal opportunities and act as positive role models.

6 First Aid Requirements

At the time of assessment, candidates should hold a current first aid certificate. The first aid course must involve at least 8 hours of instruction, include an element of assessment and cover basic life support and emergency first aid. It is the responsibility of award holders to maintain their first aid qualifications. As all candidates will already hold the CWA or SPA they are automatically expected to have a current certificate to validate these awards.

7 Complaints and Appeals Procedure

The CWLA is continually monitored and subject to regular, formal review. Candidates are encouraged to provide written feedback on their courses to their provider and/or home board.

If for any reason you find it necessary to complain about an aspect of your training/assessment course or feel that aspects of your assessment were unfair, please contact the course provider to seek clarification. If this does not resolve your concerns please contact the officer(s) of the relevant home nation training board. You will then be provided with advice and details of the appeals procedure. The Board's decision will be final.

8 Candidate and post-assessment support

Becoming a member of the Mountain Leader Training Association (MLTA) is a recommended way of obtaining further relevant training and keeping up to date with developments within the CWLA, as well as other MLT schemes. MLTA also provides networking and social events, for members to keep in touch and up to date. Membership is open to anyone who is registered for any of the national awards overseen by MLT and who is also a member of one of the Mountaineering Councils. MLTA is a web-based organisation and more information can be found at www.mlta.co.uk

9 The Importance of Mountaineering Council Membership

There are 3 Mountaineering Councils: the British Mountaineering Council (BMC), the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) and Mountaineering Ireland (MI). They are the representative bodies for hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers. They lobby and advise government, statutory bodies, landowners and National Park authorities on a range of important issues such as access, risk and responsibility and changes in legislation. All candidates registering for any MLT training scheme are required to be a member of a Mountaineering Council or a club that is affiliated to a Council.

MLT and the Mountaineering Councils work closely together in areas concerned with mountaineering good practice for individuals, leaders and groups.

MLT administers formal training schemes and the Councils dispense advice and expertise in more informal areas such as student clubs, mountaineering clubs and youth participation.

In many sports, the representative body and the awarding body are the same organisation whereas MLT and the Councils are separate entities, although closely linked. It should be noted that the Councils only receive a fee from MLT candidates at the time of registration and rely on the strength of their work to encourage candidates to renew their membership in subsequent years.

The Councils are also heavily involved in work in the following areas:

Access and Conservation. *The Councils employ full time access and conservation staff who work closely with land owners and managers in negotiating, securing and maintaining access to our mountains, moorland and crags.*

Safety and Technical. *The BMC examines gear failures, reports of which are available, and takes an important role in the UIAA in setting standards for climbing and mountaineering equipment. A wide range of material including posters, DVDs, reports, leaflets, booklets are available from the Councils, as well as access to lectures and seminars.*

Insurance. *Council members receive Civil Liability insurance cover. This provides cover during training and consolidation periods on MLT schemes. This cover does not extend to candidates trading under a company name. Personal Accident insurance is provided for individual members (not affiliated club members). See websites for details.*

Working together. *The Councils have democratic structures that allow all members to have a voice in their respective organisation. The Councils rely heavily on volunteers to suggest, guide and implement its work. Who better to be involved in our representative body than those who both work and play in the mountains?*

Other Information. *The Councils maintain extensive libraries and databases on access restrictions, climbing walls, huts, clubs and much more. They also keep an eye on developments within the climbing world so that people can always have access to current ethics and best practice within the sport.*

Further details can be found at the Councils' respective websites, including joining information, which are given in appendix 3.

Syllabus



Photo: Entre-Prises

TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas and must be able to:

Equipment

- identify and use suitable equipment appropriately for leading routes

Belaying

- Use a variety of belay devices competently and choose the most appropriate one for a given situation
- demonstrate a variety of belay techniques appropriate for lead climbing
- hold leader falls in a controlled manner and carry out lowers

Personal climbing skills

- choose and lead routes at French 6a with confidence
- demonstrate good practice when taking leader falls
- demonstrate an understanding of the safety chain with relevance to lead climbing

THE CLIMBING WALL ENVIRONMENT

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas and must be able to:

Using climbing walls

- identify appropriate and inappropriate areas of a wall to teach lead climbing and other associated skills

Etiquette

- be aware of the hazards presented to other site users by lead climbers and act in a way to keep these minimised
- demonstrate an awareness of the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to teaching leading on different climbing walls and artificial structures

SUPERVISION

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas and must be able to:

Planning

- *assess the abilities of individuals to lead routes and belay lead climbers*
- *plan individual sessions and programmes of activities with appropriate objectives*
- *understand and introduce progressive coaching activities to ensure development of appropriate knowledge, skills and experience*
- *have built in flexibility when planning activities in order to respond to changing circumstances*
- *demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to the wall management, authorising organisations, parents, guardians, group members and other wall users*

Managing

- *carry out dynamic risk assessments throughout each lead climbing session*
- *demonstrate safe and responsible management of students irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved in the climbing activity*
- *make appropriate judgements regarding the suitability of various techniques for instructing and coaching the skills required for individuals to belay lead climbers and lead climb effectively*
- *demonstrate an understanding of how to avoid and deal with common lead climbing problems*
- *manage students effectively by*
 - *good communication skills*
 - *setting and reviewing targets.*
 - *Identifying and reacting to the needs of students in relation to the development of lead climbing skills*
 - *supervise climbers belaying and leading*
- *deliver technical instruction to students including*
 - *demonstration of effective use of chosen belay device*
 - *principles of appropriate route choice*
 - *use of running belays on routes with and without extenders in place*
 - *communication between leader and belayer*
 - *falling and holding a fall*
 - *lowering to the ground*
- *manage time appropriately in relation to the plan, activity and conditions*

Movement skills

- *advise, demonstrate and coach students in climbing movement skills relevant to lead climbing*
- *demonstrate the use of appropriate climbing and non-climbing activities to develop lead climbing techniques*

Guidance notes for candidates, trainers and assessors

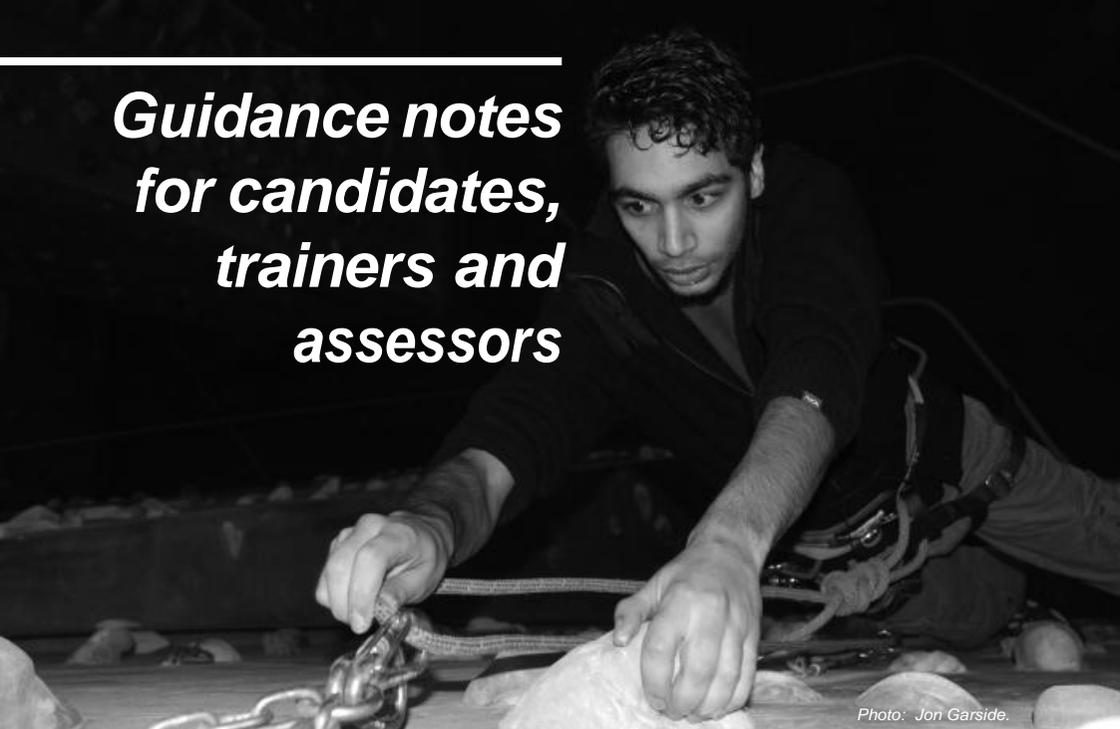


Photo: Jon Garside.

Introduction

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the syllabus and are designed to assist in training and assessment by emphasising approaches to, and interpretation of, the syllabus. Candidates, trainers and assessors should read the complete guidance notes and not only the notes specific to them. In this way a fuller understanding of the CWLA can be gained.

CWLA courses take place at a variety of walls, with their associated hazards, and are therefore for candidates with independent personal experience who have already gained the CWA or SPA. Trainers and assessors will endeavour to maintain a safe working environment. Candidates also have a duty to exercise judgement and care regarding personal safety and the safety of others.

The success of any training or assessment course is dependent upon the contribution made by all involved. It is essential that candidates have the required levels of experience and that course staff are active wall users who are up to date with current good practice. There are often several safe and effective approaches to any particular task at a specific wall, and the breadth of experience brought to the course by each person will contribute to the range of learning opportunities.

At the risk of some repetition, specific notes for candidates, trainers and assessors are included. All these notes will provide invaluable insights to assist candidates in progressing through the scheme and beyond.

Throughout this guidance the term 'wall' is used to describe a wide range of purpose-built

climbing structures. A fuller description of the range of walls that award holders may work in is described in *The Climbing Wall Environment* section of the Syllabus.



Candidates

MLT awards are based on the premise that leaders, supervisors, instructors and coaches require personal experience first, before developing the skills and techniques to work with others. For this reason, there are minimum requirements for candidates prior to both training and assessment. Candidates should be aware that if they attend a training course without having achieved these requirements they will not be in a position to benefit fully from the techniques and skills presented to them. Attendance on an assessment course without meeting the minimum requirements can lead to automatic deferral or failure.

Candidates should have experience of a range of climbing walls in order to understand both techniques taught at training and tasks they are given at assessment. Candidates should feel free to ask simple questions since they are often the most pertinent, and it is a good idea to make a record of topics and techniques covered at training, to help develop skills afterwards. Candidates should also feel free to ask questions at assessment, as a clear understanding of tasks and contexts is vital to a satisfactory outcome.

The wider the range of personal experience the more the candidate will be able to understand the contents of the course and be able to contribute to discussions. Whilst the training course will cover as much variety as possible, candidates should seek out personal experience at a variety of walls and on outdoor climbs where possible.

As with all MLT awards the CWLA is a logbook award. Candidates should view their logbook as a CV of their work, keeping it up to date as they gain experience, both before and after assessment. This allows potential employers to appreciate the range of work undertaken by an award holder and evaluate the currency of their experience. Candidates should also seek further training to support them in their work, where appropriate. The Mountain Leader Training Association (MLTA) – www.mlta.co.uk – administers continuing personal development courses for award holders.



Trainers

Trainers should assist candidates in acquiring a broad range of responses to tasks and guide them towards assessment through a variety of delivery styles and situations. Trainers should try to structure their courses in order to match the particular skill profile of candidates and with regard to any individual needs. Training should concentrate on those skills and techniques that candidates may have difficulty learning and practising during their everyday personal climbing. At the end of the course trainers should talk with candidates individually to evaluate current levels of experience and knowledge in order to develop an action plan. Candidates should complete training with a clear idea of what development is required prior to assessment.

Overall, training should be framed as a forum for developing the skills and techniques to teach lead climbing to groups and individuals in a variety of situations and should not be seen solely as a means of guiding candidates towards assessment.

However, as most candidates will be looking to proceed to assessment, then the importance of candidates meeting the assessment requirements should be made clear to them.



Assessors

Assessors will use the logbook to evaluate the experience of a candidate. However, experience cannot be measured simply in terms of the length of time a candidate has been climbing. Candidates must have logged a minimum of 100 different lead climbs, at least a half of which must be at French 6a or above. Furthermore candidates must have led routes at least three different climbing walls. In addition to this independent personal climbing experience, a potential award holder should gain experience assisting or observing at least five teaching leading sessions. Without this grounding in teaching leading to a variety of groups and individuals, candidates may lack the experience to deal with a variety of situations.

Assessors should evaluate the performance of each candidate against the requirements of the syllabus. The assessment course should be conducted in a manner that gives all candidates the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in realistic conditions. Assessors must ensure that all assessment tasks are fully understood by candidates and should seek to be clear and unambiguous in task setting. Candidates should be given sufficient opportunity to perform the required task.

It is important to remember that there may be a variety of possible solutions to any task, and assessors should look for a safe and appropriate response to the task set rather than any particular technique. Assessors should seek to assess the performance of candidates in a variety of contexts both in terms of environment used and also the range of techniques applied. Assessors must provide feedback to candidates and should explain how this will be given. A realistic and objective assessment of each individual candidate has to be made against the nationally recognised standard.

The CWLA syllabus does not define a prescribed set of techniques; rather it describes a range of skills with which candidates should be familiar. It is likely that training courses will be run as a series of open discussion workshops – taking advantage of the experience of trainers and trainees. Assessments should allow for a possible range of responses to any given situation.

1. Technical Competence



Photo: Entre-Prises



Candidates

1.1 Equipment

The CWLA syllabus is based on the assumption that candidates have experience of lead climbing and belaying at a variety of walls. The emphasis on a training course will be to provide opportunities to share ideas and refine techniques.

Candidates should be aware of the range of equipment suitable for lead climbing. This will include the suitability of different harnesses, the marrying of appropriate belay devices and ropes, and the use of helmets.

As CWA or SPA holders, candidates will be familiar with how equipment behaves in static force situations, such as when bottom or top roping. Dynamic forces are created in a rope system when a lead climber falls, and candidates need to understand how climbing equipment behaves in such circumstances.

Candidates need to appreciate that equipment suitable for one student may be inappropriate for another. Hand size, for example, is an important consideration when deciding upon what diameter of rope to use. Such decisions can become more critical when managing dynamic forces within a rope system, when compared to managing only static forces. Furthermore, decisions on rope diameter could impact upon the choice of belay device, with implications for further training, where required.

It should be appreciated that the CWLA requires candidates to have knowledge about the use of climbing equipment not covered within either the Climbing Wall or Single Pitch Awards.

The maintenance of fixed safety equipment such as anchor points and extenders is the responsibility of the climbing wall, not of its users. Candidates should be aware of the most common means by which such equipment wears out or can become damaged through

extended use, and be capable of basic visual inspection to detect obvious problems.

It would be expected that a CWLA holder could offer advice on choice and suitability of equipment, as well as having a reasonable knowledge of its care, maintenance and life expectancy. In addition to being able to offer advice on the selection and use of equipment, candidates should be aware of sources of information, including current publications and materials produced by the Mountaineering Councils, MLT and the home nation training boards.

1.2 Belaying

Candidates will have belayed a lead climber, but may never have held a leader fall. As this is an essential element of the CWLA, candidates will be expected to hold and take leader falls.

Belaying a lead climber involves paying out and taking in the rope during a single lead, combined with an element of anticipating when a lead climber will want either slack or a tight rope. As such, it is a very complex skill to execute and coach. Candidates need to demonstrate a progressive approach to teaching this skill using a variety of techniques.

Belaying methods often reflect the style of climbing. Bottom and top roping involve mainly static forces, and the appropriate belaying is often quite static in nature. A leader fall generates dynamic forces, and the belaying style is sometimes described as dynamic belaying. However, as not all leader falls are the same, using one phrase to describe a desired belaying style can be misleading.

Similarly, candidates need to appreciate that different types of leader fall often require different styles of belaying. For example, it may be both appropriate and desirable for a belayer to dynamically absorb some of the forces created by a fall when the climber is a long way from the ground. But such a style may be highly inappropriate if a leader falls very near the ground.

Candidates need to draw a distinction between different types of leader fall, identify appropriate belaying techniques and then demonstrate ways of teaching these skills.

1.3 Personal Climbing Skills

Candidates should be able to lead at French 6a at training and will be required to lead routes at this grade during assessment.

Teaching lead climbing also requires the teaching of taking leader falls. Climbers are sometimes aware that they are about to fall, but equally, a leader can fall unexpectedly. Candidates need to be confident themselves in taking leader falls, and demonstrate good practice when taking falls and teaching others.

When lead climbing, the safety chain includes elements such as the rope attachment to the climber, the running belays (and top anchor), and the belayer managing the rope. Candidates need to be aware of how variables such as belayer position and equipment choice can compromise the safety chain and identify ways of preventing such situations from occurring.



Trainers

An integrated approach to the syllabus should be adopted, with issues such as belaying, leading routes and movement skills considered as a whole where possible, rather than as isolated modules. Candidates will come with differing backgrounds and varying amounts of skill and experience, and a training course should reflect these variations. What may be appropriate for one set of trainees may not be so for another, even though all are at a suitable level to attend training. This is particularly true with candidates holding different awards, the CWA and the SPA. This variation should be seen as positive and a learning situation for all concerned. The course should be pitched at an appropriate level for each candidate where possible.

1.1 Equipment

A training course offers the opportunity for candidates to extend their experience, and this particularly applies to the use of equipment. It is expected that equipment brought by both candidates and trainer will be used to illustrate appropriate use.

Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of belay devices and belaying techniques during training. Emphasis should be placed upon the choice of equipment and methods appropriate for different groups and individuals. Essential considerations should include the following:

Harnesses

As well as ensuring that candidates are aware of good practice with their own harnesses, the appropriate use of a variety of others should be included within a training course. Consideration should be given to the occasions when a full-body harness might be used.

Candidates should be made aware that a poorly fitted harness (which may nonetheless not be dangerous) may be more likely to lead to injury when dealing with dynamic forces than when dealing with static forces, and that this can be equally true for both climber and belayer. Ways of ensuring that harnesses are properly fitted that do not involve close bodily contact should be included at training.

Helmets

Candidates should be made aware that helmet-use guidelines for teaching lead climbing vary between walls and organisations. Implications for both the use and non-use of wearing helmets when teaching lead climbing should be discussed.

Tying on

The harness manufacturer's recommended method of tying on to the rope should be encouraged. Candidates should be made aware of the pros and cons of different knots and how they vary in the degree to which they tighten once loaded by a leader fall, and the resultant ease or difficulty in then untying them.

Ropes

Candidates may be unaware of the distinction between dynamic ropes and low stretch ropes. The required use of dynamic ropes when leading, where dynamic forces are possible, compared to the fact that low stretch ropes can be used when bottom and top roping, as only static forces are encountered, illustrates the different types of forces created by different rope systems.

The relationship between a rope's maximum impact force and the energy absorbed by a rope during a leader fall should be discussed. The way in which this can relate to the forces felt by both climber and belayer should be explained, along with the implications for rope choice.

Some ropes are designed for specific uses, including wall climbing. Outlining design characteristics of such ropes can highlight the nature of wall climbing when compared to other climbing activities.

Ropes of varying diameters should be provided for candidates to use. This will allow important issues to be covered such as marrying ropes and belay devices appropriately.

Courses where candidate hand size varies considerably will allow trainers to illustrate how this is an important consideration when teaching some groups to lead climb. Some people may find narrower ropes easier to handle, whilst others may prefer thicker ropes. It may also be appropriate to talk about the use of suitable gloves when belaying.

Finally, the issue of walls having routes of differing heights and the implications of this on rope length should be discussed.

Anchors and Running belays

It is common practice for extenders to be in-situ at most walls, but as this is not universally the case, trainers should include routes where a climber has to place their own extenders. The pros and cons of grabbing extenders whilst leading should be discussed.

Clipping extenders is a vital skill that CWLA holders need to both master and coach. Not all walls have extenders at head or waist height, so trainers should demonstrate ways in which appropriately placed extenders can be arranged, such as screwing bolts into empty T-nut holes. Such an activity presents an opportunity to involve wall managers on how their facilities are used.

There are many types of top-anchor arrangements, normally, but not always, using two independent fixings. A common top-anchor design consists of two independent bolts linked by a chain to a central point, such as a closed steel ring, to which a screwgate and a snapgate karabiner are attached. The rope is then passed through both karabiners. The order in which these karabiners are clipped by a lead climber should be discussed.

Some walls have dual top-anchor systems, allowing both lead climbing and bottom-roping to occur on the same route without having to remove in-situ ropes, whilst other walls may have only single top anchors, such as a ring-bolt fixed to a wall. Occasionally, the top anchor may be provided by a steel bar. Ideally a variety of anchor types should be available at the training course locations, as this is an important discussion point.

Trainers should make candidates aware that there is no legal requirement that a particular style of top anchor be used. Trainers may have their own opinions on top-anchor design, but they should not prejudice candidates into thinking that one design is 'safe' and another 'unsafe'. Rather, advantages and disadvantages can be discussed and, where possible, wall staff can be valuably incorporated into a discussion on why a certain design has been chosen.

1.2 Belaying

When considering belaying, trainers must remember that in teaching lead climbing falls are likely if not inevitable. A thorough understanding of all aspects of belaying is required of

candidates. The difference between dynamic and static forces should be covered with relevance to belaying a lead climber.

Belay devices

With a wide variety of belay devices and techniques commonly used, a training course should enable candidates to evaluate their use and any pros and cons. In this way they can choose what is appropriate for a given situation. Trainers should ensure that a variety of devices are available and candidates should be encouraged to experiment with new devices under the guidance of a trainer. Trainers may have their own preferred techniques and devices, but a balanced view should be presented, allowing candidates to come to their own conclusions.

Factors affecting a belayer's ability to hold a fall include the type of belay device, the weight of the climber, the diameter and slickness of the rope, the gripping strength of the belayer, the position of the belayer and any other factors which create friction in the system. The positioning of the belay device and the belayer relative to the expected direction of pull is an important consideration which must be examined. Movement and position of the belayer has an important bearing in the forces experienced by a falling leader. There should be an awareness of the specific techniques and skills associated with wall climbing.

Belaying a lead climber

Candidates should have extensive experience of belaying lead climbers, but may have limited experience of holding leader falls. Each candidate should both take and hold a leader fall under close supervision. Trainers should ensure that this is done in a progressive manner.

Bolts can be close together at climbing walls, and if the belayer stands still or steps back when holding a fall, then the leader will accelerate in a very sharp arc around the last bolt clipped. This can result in a very uncomfortable fall with the potential for the leader to hit the wall as they swing in. If the belayer steps forward as the leader falls, then the slack introduced will allow the leader to fall down, and not in, producing a much more comfortable fall. This latter approach is often described as dynamic belaying.

However, when the leader is close to the ground and passing the first few bolts of a route, there is good reason for the belayer not to introduce slack into the rope system, and adopt a more static belaying style. Trainers should be clear about the appropriate belaying style to adopt at different stages of a lead climb.

If the belayer is stood a long way out with a big loop of slack, there is a chance that a fall could result in the climber making contact with the ground, or the belayer being pulled in towards the first bolt and losing control. The difference between simply having lots of slack in the system and reacting appropriately when holding a leader fall should be discussed.

Candidates should be aware that if the belayer is heavier than the climber and a dynamic belay is required, then the belayer may need to move appropriately in a proactive manner. Conversely, if the belayer is lighter than the climber, then they could get pulled off their feet when holding a leader fall, thus introducing a dynamic element more naturally.

Trainers should outline the issues around the belayer being attached to ground anchors such as sandbags. Using such equipment will generally result in a static belaying style. Even though some belayers may like to use ground anchors, their use can result in uncomfortable

falls for a lead climber. Such issues should be discussed at training.

It can be appreciated that there are many, often conflicting factors to consider when belaying a lead climber. Trainers should ensure that candidates are clear about how these different factors interrelate with each other, and provide clear guidance on appropriate courses of action.

Holding Falls

This element of the syllabus should be practised only in the most controlled situations. Holding lead climbing falls should be included in a training course in a gradual and progressive manner from the point of view of both the belayer and the falling lead climber. This provides an opportunity to illustrate the importance of good belay technique and belayer positioning, and must be performed under careful supervision. Any leader fall contains an element of risk and all participants must be aware of this risk and take all suitable precautions to minimise this.

The choice of climbing wall and route is very important for this aspect of the syllabus. Issues such as wall gradient and wall height should be discussed.

1.3 Personal Climbing Skills

Route Choice

Judgement as to the suitability of a climb is as significant for one's own enjoyment as it is for the enjoyment of those being introduced to leading routes. The selection of a suitable route is a process of combining information at a wall with personal observation. Training courses must build in opportunities for candidates to choose routes and climb them.

Leading Climbs

Candidates should lead climbs of Fr 6a or above during a training course. This allows trainers to give feedback and guidance, and provides an opportunity to discuss the following issues: belayer position, clipping quick-draws (including climber's body position, back-clipping and z-clipping), clipping top anchors, leading a route to set up a separate bottom rope, climbing calls and lowering a climber. This is also a time when movement skills can be discussed

Taking Falls

Demonstrating good practice when taking or holding falls and being a confident leader at French 6a are all of equal importance within the CWLA. Due to the psychological nature of taking leader falls, it is likely that this element of the syllabus will need to be dealt with in a wide number of ways, appropriate to each candidate's needs. Trainers should make provision for demonstrating leader falls themselves.

The Safety Chain

The basic principle of keeping the number of links in a belay system to the minimum should be explained. Candidates should be aware that introducing their own students to new equipment and techniques can in itself compromise the safety chain.



Assessors

The previous trainers' section of this handbook includes guidance on individual elements of the syllabus to a greater extent than the assessor notes produced below. Assessors should be mindful of those sections when considering the competencies required of assessment candidates.

1.1 Equipment

A candidate is expected to provide sufficient personal equipment for the assessment and be aware of its appropriate use. Assessors may choose to provide a range of equipment for candidates to use in addition to that which they bring themselves. It is usual for an assessment course to contain an element of training. Once the needs of the assessment have been met, assessors may create an opportunity to extend, as well as to assess, the knowledge of candidates in relation to suitable equipment.

Candidates should understand the importance of issues such as marrying belay devices and ropes appropriately, and demonstrate a progressive approach in all of their teaching.

1.2 Belaying

Assessors usually choose to assess this vital aspect of climbing technique by observing the candidate climbing with a peer. Belaying of lead climbers as well as holding leader falls is fundamental to the CWLA but assessors should assure themselves of the ability of candidates to undertake this competently before looking at holding falls. A structured and progressive assessment of candidates belaying ability is strongly recommended.

Candidates should be aware of the various appropriate styles when belaying a leader and holding falls, and demonstrate ways in which they can coach others in these skills.

1.3 Personal Climbing Skills

The candidate will commonly be given a free choice of routes on which to demonstrate competence. Route selection using information at a wall or by a visual assessment of the route can reveal much about the experience of the candidate.

Leading Climbs

Candidates should have recorded the leading of French 6a grade climbs or above in their logbooks. The ability of the award holder to lead climbs at this grade or more is a fundamental requirement of the CWLA. Candidates are expected to lead climbs during an assessment course, fluently and confidently.

Leading can be used to evaluate the ability of a candidate and to stress the significance of personal involvement in the sport, from which safe systems for supervising novices will flow naturally.

Taking Falls

Candidates are expected to demonstrate good practice when taking leader falls. Whilst assessors should be mindful of the psychological aspect of this element of the syllabus, they should also be mindful of the importance of candidates demonstrating this skill.

A wide range of climbing facilities already exists and, with construction methods continually evolving, new styles may appear in the future. Existing provision includes beginner walls, free-standing boulders, bouldering walls, traversing walls, leading walls, climbing towers, competition walls and adventure walls (walls including ropeways, tunnels or other features). Many climbing facilities include more than one of these elements - a leading or bouldering wall could also be a competition wall, for example.

2. The Climbing Wall Environment



Walls can be temporary or permanent, can be indoors and outdoors, and either occupy dedicated areas or share facilities with other activities.

The ability to identify appropriate and inappropriate areas of a wall where lead climbing and other associated skills can be taught is a key skill to develop within the CWLA.

Wall managers have a duty of care to protect members of the public from foreseeable risks, be they climbers or spectators, and this extends to preparing codes of conduct for wall users. It is important for those working on walls to make themselves aware of such codes and to be considerate of other users. Award holders may themselves be instrumental in drawing up such codes for the facilities where they work.



Candidates

2.1 Using Climbing Walls

Climbing walls have become justifiably popular climbing venues for both individuals and groups, as they offer a wide variety of climbing opportunities.

At registration, candidates should be competent lead climbers and able to make full use of a wall for their personal climbing. At training, that experience will be developed, and ways in which walls can be used to teach lead climbing in a progressive manner will be covered. At assessment, candidates should feel confident to make judgements on the appropriateness of any wall to teach lead climbing skills.

As with other sport facilities, walls are managed environments with user guidelines, some of which may apply to the teaching of lead climbing. The production of specific

documentation before commencing their session may be required, for example. Candidates must be aware of common regulations associated with use of walls and know how to access relevant information.

The CWLA does not include the skills and techniques of wall management and maintenance. However, where appropriate, candidates should be aware of how to obtain relevant outside expertise to help deal with such issues. Prior to training, candidates will have climbed at a variety of walls and should be aware of commonly used registration systems.

As with all purpose-built sport facilities, those designed for climbing can suffer wear or become damaged. It is rare for a climbing wall to 'fail' structurally in any way, such as a hold breaking off, and climbing wall users are not responsible for wall maintenance. However, candidates should make themselves familiar with the chain of responsibility for the maintenance of walls they use, and be in a position to report any concerns they may have.

Some walls may be housed in dedicated buildings and others may be located at the end of a sports hall, sharing space with other activities. Candidates should consider how this variety can greatly affect the way in which lead climbing is taught.

Candidates should understand the range of grades used at walls: the French grading system for roped climbs, the V and Font grading system for boulder problems and the less commonly used traditional grading system. Just as when using a wall for personal climbing, the selection of appropriate climbs and bouldering activities is a vital skill when teaching and developing lead climbing skills.

2.2 Etiquette

Those working in climbing walls need to have a sympathetic understanding of the needs of other climbers and groups. Unless specific arrangements have been made, all wall users have an equal right to use the facility, and candidates need to adopt a flexible approach to their work. Candidates should be conscious that inappropriate group-management and instruction could impact upon the enjoyment and safety of other climbers and spectators.

Teaching lead climbing involves the additional likelihood of both climbers and belayers moving quickly and unexpectedly. Party management must reflect this state of affairs.



Trainers

2.1 Using Climbing Walls

An appropriate climbing facility will be used for a training course, and trainers will be mindful of the rules or regulations applying to the venue chosen. Discussing the source of such information, and any implications for the conduct of the training course, allows candidates to appreciate issues they need to consider in their own work.

It may be beneficial to ask a member of wall staff to provide input on the use of their facility. Including wall management within course delivery can help paint pictures of the issues of which candidates need to be aware.

Candidates should be made aware of the large variety of indoor and outdoor climbing facilities available, along with the various ways in which these facilities are managed. A large public facility in a dedicated building is very different from a shared facility in a sports hall for example. Each presents very different considerations regarding its use and suitability as

a lead climbing venue.

Perhaps the most important aspect to cover within this part of the syllabus is identifying how different areas of a wall present different challenges and opportunities when teaching lead climbing skills. Bouldering walls can be used to develop movement skills such as resting on one arm, for example; a vital skill when it comes to clipping bolts. Slabs provide easier routes, more suited to a climber's first leads, and overhanging routes are generally more appropriate for looking at leader falls.

Wall height is another important issue to cover in a variety of contexts, such as rope length, mental preparation for climbing far from the ground, and issues around taking leader falls.

Training venues should provide a wide range of climbing surfaces, gradients and route heights to ensure that candidates are exposed to a variety of ways in which lead climbing skills can be developed

2.2 Etiquette

Climbing at walls commonly means that users are operating in close proximity to each other. It will be valuable to discuss management strategies that maximise involvement and minimise problems.

Candidates should be made aware of the following good practice which can be demonstrated practically throughout a training course: moving around the wall (instead of repeatedly climbing the same route) and working in small groups. Unless specific arrangements have been made, all wall users have an equal right to climb the same routes. No one group or individual should take over an area for an extended period of time.

Trainers should make clear that etiquette refers to the way in which wall users respect each other's needs. Etiquette has important implications for safety. For example, if holding leader falls is to be practiced, then ensuring clear falls and eliminating the possibility of ground falls or the faller hitting someone else, is vital when considering belayer position.



Assessors

2.1 Using Climbing Walls

Candidates should demonstrate an awareness of common issues relating to the use of walls. Not all climbing facilities are managed in the same way; therefore, it is most important that candidates are aware of sources of relevant information and prepared to meet common requirements.

Evaluation of the attitudes and actions of candidates relating to climbing-wall use should carry equal weighting to their practical performance. Assessors should employ a variety of techniques to evaluate candidate's knowledge, such as discussion topics, scrutiny of the logbook, observation during all stages of the practical course and direct questioning as issues present themselves.

It is likely that only one facility will be visited during an assessment course; this should be a large public wall offering good facilities and route choice for lead climbing and bouldering. Assessors should satisfy themselves that candidates are able to use different areas of a climbing wall to develop a variety of lead climbing skills.

2.2 Etiquette

Groups and even individuals under instruction at a climbing wall are often very visible to other climbers and spectators. Assessors must be confident that candidates can operate in a suitably sensitive way so as to avoid conflict between their group activities and the interests of others.

Effective organisation of a session requires good planning, and this in turn requires a clear understanding of the objectives. Candidates must develop an awareness of how variables such as the abilities and motivation of the individuals, the characteristics of different venues and the weather (particularly for outside walls) may all have an impact on the effectiveness of the session. It is often the case that the quality of the experience for participants may suffer if these factors are not recognised. The ability to change plans to suit differing circumstances is fundamental to any successful session.

The CWLA syllabus does not prescribe ways in which lead climbing should be taught. Different people require different approaches, depending upon the aims of the session and the experience of the climbers. The CWLA is delivered within peer groups to allow candidates, trainers and assessors to recount their own experiences, discuss issues and cover a range of delivery styles practically.

3. Supervision



Photo: dbm-photo.co.uk

The first two sections of this part of the syllabus can be seen as a continuum of skills required to prepare and supervise a session, and should not just be seen as discrete skills used to complete specific tasks. **Planning** includes tasks that are completed before meeting with a group and describes the way in which individuals are properly equipped and informed before, during and after a climbing session. **Managing** encompasses many of the skills and techniques for supervising a climbing session.



Candidates

When supervising bottom or top roping sessions, a mismatch between climber ability and route grade is often straightforward to deal with. When teaching lead climbing, such mismatches may be more difficult to manage. Candidates need therefore to make sound judgements of both a climber's technical ability and mental preparedness when identifying appropriate routes for them to lead. Such judgements should be seen as underpinning the way in which a session is planned and executed.

Candidates may have little or no experience of teaching leading at training, but by the time they reach assessment will have observed or assisted on at least five teaching of lead climbing sessions.

3.1 Planning

When planning a session, candidates should consider the implications of factors such as group members' individual experience and expectations, the venue, authorising organisations (where applicable) and other wall users. Walls may be used for a one-off sessions or a long-term programme, and candidates should be aware of possible implications this will have upon the way in which an individual session is planned and executed.

Within any climbing wall there will often be a great range of lead climbing routes varying in difficulty, steepness and length. Planning encompasses consideration of the type of climbing that may be most appropriate for teaching leading. Only by developing a wide range of personal climbing wall experience will candidates be able to plan an effective session for others.

Candidates need to be able to plan sessions that introduce key lead climbing skills in a progressive manner. Some skills can be taught at ground level such as clipping extenders or reading routes. Both can then be developed further in a bottom rope system before a climber leads a route. Candidates need to develop similar methods for introducing other key lead climbing skills progressively.

Leading routes introduces a psychological element that is not present when bottom or top roping, and it can be difficult to predict how individuals will react to such a challenge. Candidates need therefore to be able to change their plans in accordance with the changing circumstances of those they are teaching.

Candidates should also be aware of the different ways in which people learn and, whilst there may well be an emphasis on physical demonstration as a teaching strategy, should be able to incorporate a variety of basic teaching skills into their sessions (written handouts, verbal instruction, physical demonstration, graphic information, questioning, feedback).

3.3 Managing

Candidates need to have a range of group management strategies. Even within the same group there is likely to be a range of personal ability and motivation, and working with each person as an individual can be challenging for even the most experienced.

Clear communication is the basis of good management and effective instruction. Making everyone aware of hazards associated with lead climbing and getting them involved in the management of these risks engenders an atmosphere where all feel actively involved.

Managing group members whilst climbing should be seen as only one element of supervision, as it is the management of those not climbing that is often more complex. This can be especially true at a busy wall with many distractions.

One of the most safety critical skills that Award holders will teach is the belaying of lead climbers. Some of the mechanics of belaying and leading are discussed in section 1.2 of the Trainers guidance notes and are not repeated here. When teaching and managing those belaying lead climbers for the first time, candidates should adopt both a varied and systematic approach. Candidates will need to make judgements about the competencies of others to belay lead climbers effectively.

As CWA or SPA holders, candidates will have experience of managing bottom and top roping climbing groups. One important element of such management is the ability to foresee how incidents may arise and plan accordingly.

Working alongside more experienced lead climbing trainers will help candidates appreciate how sessions can be designed to reduce the likelihood of problems occurring. As with personal climbing, this experience should be as varied as possible and gained at a variety of walls.

Avoidance and Recognition of Problems

When lead climbing, there can be less time available to deal with incidents, such as a lead climber z-clipping extenders and being unable to correct the situation. Candidates need therefore to be able to make dynamic risk assessments throughout their sessions, looking to foresee and hopefully prevent problems from arising in the first place, and adopting appropriate courses of actions when problems do arise.

A common lead climbing problem can be difficulty in clipping extenders. Reasons for this include poor body position, nervousness, technical inability and fatigue. Each of which will require a different approach to correct. When dealing with common problems candidates need to be able to identify first the cause and then the appropriate plan of action.

Finally, climbing should be fun! Managing a group effectively should not detract from a group enjoying themselves.

3.3 Movement Skills

Climbing walls are excellent venues for learning and improving on the elements of efficient climbing movement, and CWLA holders should be able to improve their students' movement skills if delivering one-off sessions or managing a long-term programme.

Candidates need to have a clear understanding of the concept of 'Centre of Balance' and its relevance to climbing. Candidates should appreciate how different climbing styles affect the position of the body's centre of balance and how that impacts upon the way in which the different muscle groups within the body are used.

Knowledge of the principles of efficient climbing movement should not be new to candidates, as this is a key part of the CWA syllabus. Instead, candidates need to be aware of issues which are maybe more relevant to lead climbing.

For example, even though not strictly a movement skill, lead climbing requires the adoption of a stable position (where possible) each time an extender is clipped.

When coaching key skills such as these, candidates need to demonstrate knowledge of appropriate climbing and non-climbing activities, alongside the ability to use roped and non-roped areas of a climbing wall.

Smooth and fluid movement when bouldering or bottom roping can be transformed to stiff and jerky movements when leading a route. Such radical changes in style can often be due to nerves. Candidates are not expected to be 'psychological coaches' but should be able to identify activities to help a novice lead climber transfer their movement skills to lead climbing situations.



Trainers

3.1 Planning

A range of considerations is taken into account when planning a session including group experience, objectives and venue choice. Trainers should draw upon their own experience to illustrate how these sometimes conflicting elements can be managed.

Candidates should be made aware of the various ways in which many lead climbing skills, such as clipping extenders or identifying resting positions, can be taught without requiring

a route to be led. Trainers should emphasise the way in which sessions should be planned to introduce skills in a progressive manner in order to best prepare novice lead climbers.

Different walls have different characteristics and may or may not be suitable for the objectives of a particular session. As not all leading walls are best suited for novice lead climbers, the way in which sessions can be planned to make best use of climbing facilities should be covered.

Therefore, candidates should be encouraged to consider the type of venue that may be most suited to certain groups or for developing specific climbing skills. Candidates may not be aware of the range of facilities available, and a training course should provide them with inspiration for their own work.

As the CWLA is largely concerned with the 'teaching' of skills, and judging the progress of learners, it is important that some time is devoted to the varied techniques that can be used for imparting information and skills and evaluating the progress made by those being taught. Trainers should seek to use a variety of methods (written handouts, verbal instruction, physical demonstration, graphic information, questioning, feedback) within the training course both as an example and also as a discussion point for the candidates

3.2 Managing

There is no single way to manage a group, and trainers should draw upon their own and candidates' experience. Candidates should be reminded that a well-managed climbing session will be enjoyable for all, and that group members can be involved in managing the risks in ways appropriate to their experience and maturity. It should be made clear that planning and managing are elements of one continuum.

Leading routes and belaying lead climbers require very different skills, and ways of managing these two activities may be covered in isolation. However, it is also necessary to discuss ways in which both can be managed at the same time. Some of the mechanics of belaying and leading are discussed in section 1.2 of the Trainers' guidance notes, and are not repeated here.

Candidates may not be aware of exercises that can be used to develop specific skills. Belaying a climber up and down on a bottom rope can help to develop the skills of taking in and then paying out the rope, for example, and trailing a rope when bottom rope climbing can be used to develop clipping skills.

Candidates should be aware that fundamental belaying and leading skills need to be covered first, before introducing their clients to lead climbing. Candidates will be best equipped to manage such an approach if exposed to a variety of ways to develop such skills.

Managing rope systems

When bottom or top rope climbing, the climber has no direct control over how the rope system is managed. From a safety perspective, those supervising such sessions are likely to be more interested in the actions of the belayer(s). Conversely, the actions of lead climber and belayer can affect the safety of both.

Therefore, those supervising lead climbing sessions need to be able to make judgements of

the competencies of others to manage rope systems in isolation; especially the competencies of the climber, as the belayer will be at ground level and so easier to manage directly. Making such judgements is not covered within either the Climbing Wall or Single Pitch Awards, so time should be spent discussing this issue.

Belayer error is a potential cause of serious accidents. The selection of an appropriate belay device and its correct use are fundamental to teaching lead climbing. The decision as to when a student is capable of undertaking this element of rope management is an important one and is a critical judgement on the part of the supervisor.

Candidates may have limited experience of using different belay devices and it may often be appropriate to create several opportunities during a training course to demonstrate a variety of belaying methods.

The difference between static and dynamic forces needs to be explained, and it should be made clear how rope systems are managed in accordance with the types of force that are likely to be encountered.

Avoidance and Recognition of Problems

A training course should include a formal risk assessment, which may be best carried out at the training venue. A risk assessment highlights potential hazards that have direct implications for the avoidance and recognition of problems. Candidates should be made aware of the benefit of such an exercise.

Dynamic risk assessments should also be discussed, including their meaning and how they are made. Teaching leading is one aspect of climbing that is commonly considered to be quite hazardous and managing this risk is of paramount importance.

Emphasis should be placed on good practices that avoid problems rather than on specific techniques required to solve them. Opportunities to discuss and demonstrate good practice in the following should be integrated throughout the training course: venue and route choice, managing expectations, establishing communications and positioning of the climber, belayer and the supervisor.

Problems are likely to fall into three categories: those in which no-one is exposed to immediate danger, such as an anxious climber, those in which there is real risk of injury, such as a climber becoming detached from a rope, and those which could become more serious without quick action being taken, such as the z-clipping of extenders, or the rope becoming entangled in the leader's legs.

The first type is not uncommon, the second type is very rare and the third type can be difficult to predict, as it can occur to even the most experienced of lead climbers. When teaching leading, problems requiring quick action are likely to be encountered. From their previous work, candidates may not be used to dealing with such incidents.

In addition to an integrated approach to problem avoidance, a hierarchy of actions to solve simple problems should be discussed and covered practically.

Route Choice

A well-selected route should match the skills, ability and aspirations of individual climbers. Even though problems such as over-anxiety should not occur it is not uncommon to have to

deal with such situations when teaching lead climbing. Therefore, the relative 'safety' of a route should be discussed, taking into account such factors as the angle, the location of the most difficult moves, the level of difficulty and the danger to and presented by a falling leader.

3.3 Movement Skills

Candidates should already be able to coach basic movement skills, as outlined in the CWA handbook. A general refresher is likely to be necessary but trainers should concentrate on activities that develop key lead climbing movement skills.

Training venues should provide dedicated bouldering areas and roped climbing, all at a variety of gradients. The way in which different areas of a wall lend themselves to developing different movement skills should be covered at training.

Clipping extenders requires climbers to secure themselves with one hand and in a resting position wherever possible. As leading a route can take longer than other forms of roped climbing, the ability to rest and recover is an important skill to develop. Resting is not specifically a movement skill, but body position is integral to being able to rest.

Another and more challenging skill to develop is the ability to read routes before leading them. Visualisation of moves in advance can result in less energy being required when actually climbing, and the colour coding of climbing wall routes lends itself very well to developing these skills. Reading boulder problems of only a few moves can be a powerful and fun way to introduce this skill.

Climbing Wall Angle

Modern climbing walls include panels which range in inclination from slab to roof, and CWLA holders are likely to supervise groups on a large variety of angles of climbing surface. Therefore, the different climbing styles used for different levels of steepness should be discussed and practised. The difference in safety with falls on different angles and even hold types should be examined.

Candidates' personal ability should be such as to allow them to lead effectively on the steeper sections of a wall, particularly if lead falls are to be looked at, so climbing styles for steeper angles will be important.

However, the fundamental principles of efficient climbing movement are the same, irrespective of the angle of a climb, and climbing on a variety of surfaces can be very powerful in reinforcing these principles.



Assessors

The assessment of supervision may take place with groups of climbers who have not lead routes previously, through role-play with peers and through discussion. An assessor should consider the supervisory experience recorded in the logbook and use this to create an overall picture of the candidate. The benefits of using a real group during an assessment must be balanced against the complications that result from having an additional group for which the assessor may have overall responsibility. This situation needs to be very carefully managed, otherwise the flexibility of a session may be lost and an assessment compromised. The benefits of assessing a candidate in a more realistic supervisory role, however, may at times outweigh the potential difficulties.

It is usual for an assessor to establish candidates' personal climbing competence before assessing them in a supervisory capacity. Assessing personal ability ensures an appropriate emphasis on the need for a candidate to be a wall climber first and foremost rather than simply a supervisor with limited ability and understanding of the activity.

Assessors should satisfy themselves that candidates are able to plan and then manage effective and appropriate sessions.

3.1 Planning

Candidates need to demonstrate an awareness of factors to consider when planning a session. These are likely to include some or all of the following: the group's experience and aspirations, the venue chosen, insurance, child protection and the policies of authorising organisations. Candidates should appreciate conflicts that may occur and be able to plan a session with built-in flexibility.

Candidates must possess a current first aid certificate for their CWLA although they should have this to validate their SPA or CWA. A Pass may not be issued at assessment to a candidate not possessing a current and suitable first aid qualification. Candidates need to have a good understanding of the procedures for administering first aid and calling for help in the event of an accident or illness.

Effective planning is vital to the success of any climbing session. The serious nature of lead climbing means that inappropriately planned sessions can result in sessions that are difficult to manage.

Assessors should evaluate the ways in which candidates impart skills and knowledge, especially the clarity of their communication and the effectiveness of their demonstrations. An awareness of different ways of teaching should be evident. The strategies for evaluating the progress of the learner should also be examined, as one of the crucial judgements for award holders will be deciding when individuals are ready to belay and lead. It may be useful to ask candidates to submit session plans along with any teaching materials they might use to the assessor prior to the course.

3.2 Managing

Managing a group of climbers requires judgement as to when to apply the different skills and techniques that a supervisor possesses. Assessors should build in opportunities throughout the course where different solutions are demanded. For instance, beginning a session with bouldering / roped climbing, the appropriateness of peer belaying / supervisor belaying, using activities / explanations to coach movement skills. Creating choices provides opportunities for candidates to demonstrate judgement as well as perform skills.

In their work, CWLA award holders will make assessments on the competencies of others to lead climbs, and also about when they are ready to belay lead climbers; it is important that they understand the implications of delegating belaying to young people. Assessors should consider ways in which they can assess such decision-making skills.

Group Supervision

Climbing walls are often busy, presenting distractions and other hazards for wall users. Candidates need to demonstrate appropriate management styles that do not compromise their group's safety or that of other wall users.

When lead climbing, one of the more difficult decisions a supervisor must make is when to allow others to belay and how to manage these situations. As belayer error is a potential cause of serious accidents, candidates should appreciate when peer belaying may or may not be appropriate and should know a range of safe rope management strategies suitable for a variety of situations.

Similarly, the actions of a lead climber can affect other wall users to greater extent than a bottom or top roped climber. Candidates should demonstrate ways in which they assess the suitability of an individual to lead climb.

Climbing Objectives

The selection of appropriate routes forms a very important part of effective group management and problem avoidance. When too hard, objectives can intimidate, demotivate and possibly injure group members. When too easy, a group will not be challenged and can become bored with the activity. Much can be learnt about a candidate's personal climbing-wall experience by asking them to choose climbs for others with a range of experience and aspirations.

The potential for inappropriate objectives to result in serious incidents is more likely in a lead climbing situation, than when bottom or top rope climbing. Candidates should have a systematic approach to the way in which they deem routes either appropriate or inappropriate for their clients.

Avoidance and Recognition of Problems

Problem avoidance is a theme that is best dealt with as issues arise throughout assessment, rather than as a session in isolation. Candidates should be able to plan, organise and manage a leading session effectively, in which the group is briefed appropriately and directed towards objectives that are matched to their ability and aspirations. Candidates should appreciate that such an approach is the best way to avoid the most common problems arising in the first place.

Candidates should possess strategies allowing them to deal with problems where no individual is in immediate danger, such as a nervous climber, and those where there is a real risk of injury, such as a climber becoming detached from the rope. With more serious scenarios, candidates should demonstrate strategies where they, their group and other wall users are not exposed to danger as well.

Candidates need also to deal with problems where time is of the essence to prevent a situation from escalating, such as a leader z-clipping extenders.

Where a candidate does not appear to have the experience to foresee problems it would be reasonable to set a testing scenario that requires appropriate skills to resolve. Equally, where an assessor has every confidence that a candidate has the experience to foresee and avoid problems, they may not need to set a specific problem to solve.

3.3 Movement Skills

Candidates are expected to understand principles of efficient climbing movement and be able to coach others in these skills. A comparison can be made with other elements of the syllabus, such as belaying or clipping extenders, where candidates need to demonstrate personal competence and be able to coach good practice.

There are many ways in which a candidate's knowledge of movement skills can be assessed, including the ability to lead confidently and efficiently at French 6a or above. Candidates can then explain movement principles and demonstrate these practically. Whilst candidates may often work with groups over a long period of time and may well be able to develop the skills and abilities of those in their charge, they are not expected to be high performance coaches with the skills and knowledge to develop training plans or other such resources.

Candidates should be able to use a range of climbing and non-climbing exercises that develop movement skills relevant to lead climbing. They should demonstrate a progressive approach whereby skills can be developed in easier to manage activities first, such as bouldering, before being used in lead climbing situations. Assessment should provide an opportunity to share ideas and develop this knowledge further.

Appendices

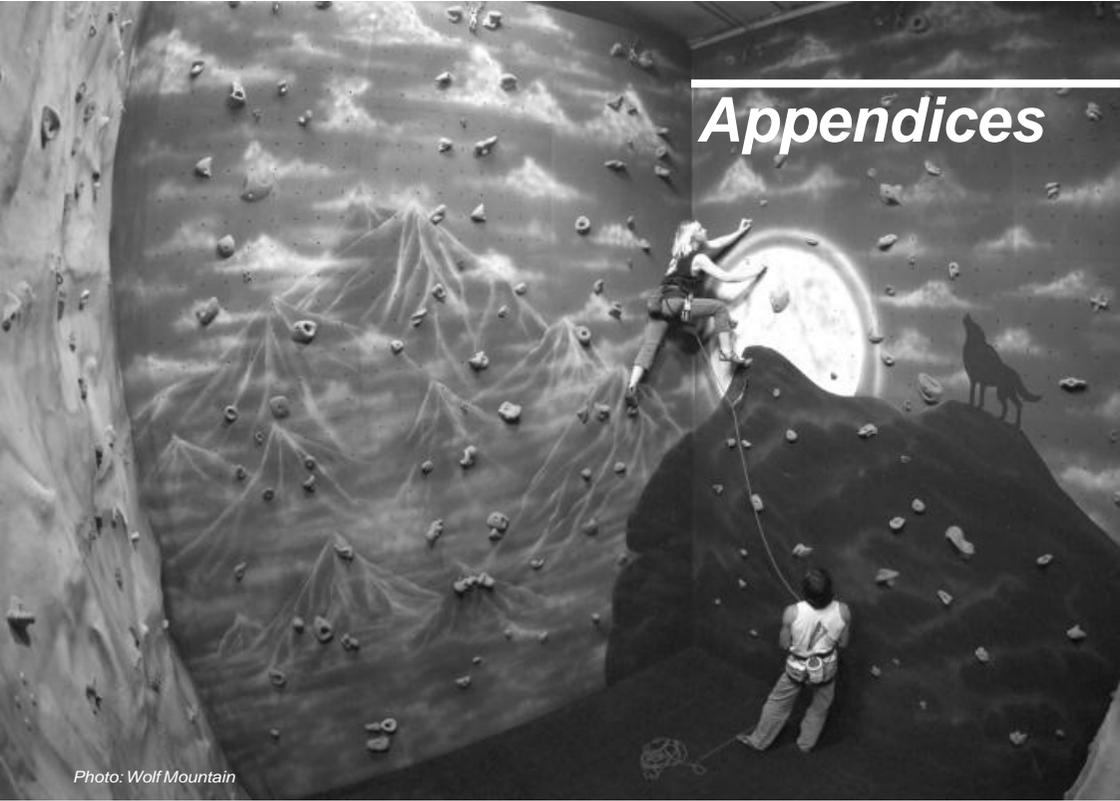


Photo: Wolf Mountain

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Appendix 1

Model Home Paper

Technical Competence

1. *What does PPE stand for?*
2. *Which of the following climbing equipment are classed as PPE?
Belay devices, karabiners, bolt hangers, maillons, ropes.*
3. *What does a rope's "impact force" mean?*
4. *Where on a route will the karabiners on extenders receive the most wear? and why?*
5. *How often might you expect the anchors and running belays on a leading wall to be tested?*
6. *Which national organisation has a technical committee that investigates climbing equipment failures?*
7. *What does 3-sigma rating mean?*
8. *Name four factors which affect the way in which a rope and belay device work together?*

Climbing Wall Environment

1. *How might the setting of a route affect the lifespan of the fixed equipment on a climbing wall?*
2. *Where might you commonly find steel karabiners on a wall? Why are they used in certain places?*
3. *When using a public wall to teach lead climbing for the first time, identify four questions you may ask the wall management.*
4. *What communication problems are commonly experienced at a wall?*
5. *What does the standard EN 12572-1 relate to?*
6. *Identify four similarities and four differences between climbing on a wall and a bolted crag.*
7. *What considerations would you make if using your own extenders when leading on a climbing wall?*
8. *What do the acronyms CWMA, ABC and NICAS stand for? Briefly explain each of them.*

Supervision

- 1. When practising leader falls how could climbers, belayers or observers be injured?*
- 2. Name three ways in which you might safeguard against the chance of such injuries occurring.*
- 3. Identify some age specific issues relating to teaching leading?*
- 4. Do gloves have a place when belaying a leader?*
- 5. Identify four common mistakes made by novice lead climbers?*
- 6. What do you think it important to include in a briefing to someone leading a route for the first time?*
- 7. How might you go about assessing an individual as being suitable to belay a lead climber?*
- 8. How might the bouldering or bottom roping areas of a wall be used to develop lead climbing skills?*

Appendix 2

Sample Programme

Climbing Wall Award

Training Course – *Minimum eight hours contact time*

Providers may choose to offer this course in a range of formats, from one long day, a short weekend, or a number of sessions. One example is shown below.

Day 1

Evening

Course introduction, paperwork, review of personal climbing experience

The climbing wall environment

Equipment, belaying, personal lead climbing skills

Day 2

Morning

Planning, organising and managing sessions

Duty of Care

Approaches to teaching leading skills

Afternoon

Group supervision and management

Teaching and coaching lead climbing

Problem avoidance and managing common problems

Assessment Course – *Minimum six hours contact time*

Day 1

Morning

Meet at Climbing Wall

Course introduction, home paper review

Personal climbing skills

Afternoon

Teaching Leading Skills

(Providers may or may not choose to use 'real students' as part of the session)

Appendix 3

Mountain Training Boards and Mountaineering Councils

Mountain Leader Training

MLT, Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ES

Tel: 01690 720272

Fax: 01690 720248

Email: info@mountainleadertraining.org

Website: www.mountainleadertraining.org

Home Nation Mountain Training Boards

Mountain Leader Training England

MLTE, Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ES

Tel: 01690 720314

Fax: 01690 720248

Email: info@mlte.org

Website: www.mlte.org

Mountain Leader Training Northern Ireland

MLTNI, Tollymore Mountain Centre, Bryansford, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0PT

Tel: 02843 722158

Fax: 02843 726155

Email: admin@tollymoremc.com

Website: www.tollymoremc.com

Mountain Leader Training Scotland

MLTS, Glenmore, Aviemore, Inverness-shire PH22 1QU

Tel: 01479 861248

Fax: 01479 861249

Email: smltb@aol.com

Website: www.mltscotland.org

Mountain Leader Training Wales / Hyfforddi Arweinwyr Mynydd Cymru

MLTW, Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ES

Tel: 01690 720361

Fax: 01690 720248

Email: info@mltw.org

Website: www.mltw.org

Mountaineering Councils

British Mountaineering Council

BMC, 177-179 Burton Road, Manchester M20 2BB

Tel: 0161 445 6111

Fax: 0161 445 4500

Email: office@thebmc.co.uk

Website: www.thebmc.co.uk

Mountaineering Ireland

MI, Sport HQ, 13 Joyce Way, Park West Business Park, Dublin 12, Ireland

Tel: 00 353 (1) 625 1115

Fax: 00 353 (1) 625 1116

Email: info@mountaineering.ie

Website: www.mountaineering.ie

Mountaineering Council of Scotland

MCoFS, The Old Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP

Tel: 01738 638227

Fax: 01738 442095

Email: info@mcofs.org.uk

Website: www.mcofs.org.uk

Appendix 4 Suggested Reading List



The following publications, whilst not an exhaustive list, are relevant to several areas of the syllabus:

Rock Climbing – Essential Skills & Techniques Libby Peter, MLTUK, 2004

Learning to Climb Indoors Eric Horst, Falcon Guides, 2008

Climbing Games Paul Smith, Pesda Press, 2009

The Climbing Handbook Steve Long, A & C Black, 2007

Indoor Climbing Pete Hill, Cicerone, 2009

Climbing Wall Manual BMC, 2008

Care and Maintenance of Equipment BMC, 2002

National Guidelines for Climbing and

Walking Leaders, 4th Edition MLT, 2009

Child Protection Policies Mountaineering Councils

Protecting Children – A Guide for Sportspeople Nick Slinn, Sportscoach UK and NSPCC,

2006

Leading and Managing Groups in the Outdoors, 2nd Edition . . . Ken Ogilvie & Lyn Noble, NAOE

Publications, 2005

Outdoor Activities, Negligence and the Law Julian Fulbrook. Ashgate, 2005

Safety, Risk & Adventure in Outdoor Activities B Barton, PCP, 2007

Training

- Training for Climbing, 2nd Edition*Eric Horst, Falcon Guides, 2009
- The Rock Warrior's Way:*Arno Ilgner, Desiderata Inst,
Mental Training for Climbers 2006
- The Self Coached Climber*Dan Hague & Douglas Hunter,
Stackpole Books, 2006
- One Move Too Many*Thomas Hichholzer & Volker Schoeffl,
Petzl, 2003
- Conditioning for Climbers*Eric Horst, Falcon Guides, 2009
- 9 out of 10 Climbers make the same mistakes*Dave McLeod, Rare Breed Productions, 2009
- Pilates for the Outdoor Athlete*Lauri Ann Stricker, Fulcrum, 2007

DVD Titles

- Climb When Ready*UIAA, 2005
- Masterclass, Parts 1+2*Neil Gresham, Crux Films, 2005
- Get out on Rock*Libby Peter & Neil Gresham,
Crux Films, 2008

Websites

- www.thebmc.co.uk British Mountaineering Council
- www.mcofs.org.uk Mountaineering Council of Scotland
- www.mountaineering.ie Mountaineering Ireland
- www.mountainleadertraining.org Mountain Leader Training
- www.mlte.org Mountain Leader Training England
- www.mlscotland.org Mountain Leader Training Scotland
- www.mltw.org Mountain Leader Training Wales
- www.hse.gov.uk Health and Safety Executive
- www.ukclimbing.com UK Climbing

Appendix 5

Provider and Director Guidance

In September 1997 MLT agreed a set of quality control requirements for the delivery of all MLT schemes. Individual boards may then add to these minimum requirements.

1 Approval System

Approval to become a course Provider/ Director may only be granted by a training board and not an individual employee. Initial approval is for one probationary course, which should be moderated. Approval will then be granted subject to a favourable report.

Course Provider / Director status is granted for one year only. A review at the end of the year enables the board to consider all approvals.

All Providers / Directors must be existing Climbing Wall Award course Providers and holders of either a Mountaineering Instructor Award or Certificate, or be British Mountain Guides. They must have experience of at least six CWA courses¹, one of which must be an assessment, before gaining approval. All Provider applicants have to satisfy their board that they fulfil any additional requirements, such as meeting the needs of specific catchments of candidates. In addition, all provider applicants must attend a CWLA Induction. Providers need to be confident leading routes at French 6b or above.

2 Workshops

All boards run training events and workshops for their Providers. Attendance at an approved / appropriate workshop or seminar at least once every three years is a mandatory requirement. Providers may attend events run by their own or any other board.

3 Ratios

1:4 on training courses, maximum course size 8, minimum 4. Additional staff must hold CWLA or a higher award and have appropriate experience/knowledge of teaching leading.

1:4 on assessment courses, maximum course size 8, minimum 2. Additional staff must hold MIA or a higher award.

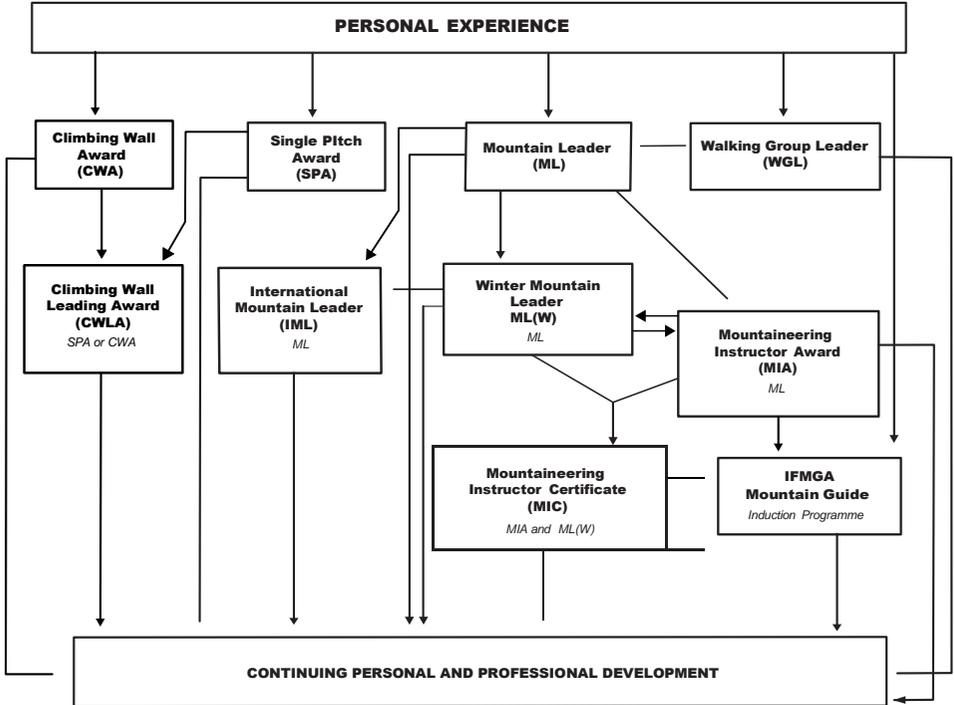
4 Moderation

Following the initial visit to the probationary course, Providers / Directors can normally expect to be visited by a moderator once in every three years.

¹ Delivery of relevant sessions on MIA courses is also acceptable

Appendix 6 Climbing, Hill Walking and Mountaineering Awards of the UK

Personal experience requirements increase as candidates progress to higher awards,



*Pre-requisite qualifications shown in Italics
Dotted lines show optional pathways*

Climbing Wall Leading Award

Skills Checklist

Syllabus Area	Can I do this?	Notes
<p>TECHNICAL COMPETENCE</p> <p>Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify and use suitable equipment appropriately for leading routes</i> 		
<p>Belaying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use a variety of belay devices competently and choose the most appropriate one for a given situation</i> • <i>demonstrate a variety of belay techniques appropriate for lead climbing</i> • <i>hold leader falls in a controlled manner and carry out lowers</i> 		
<p>Personal climbing skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>choose and lead routes at French 6a with confidence</i> • <i>demonstrate good practice when taking leader falls</i> • <i>demonstrate an understanding of the safety chain with relevance to lead climbing</i> 		
<p>THE CLIMBING WALL ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Using climbing walls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify appropriate and inappropriate areas of a wall to teach lead climbing and other associated skills</i> 		
<p>Etiquette</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be aware of the hazards presented to other site users by lead climbers and act in a way to keep these minimised</i> • <i>demonstrate an awareness of the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to teaching leading on different climbing walls and artificial structures</i> 		

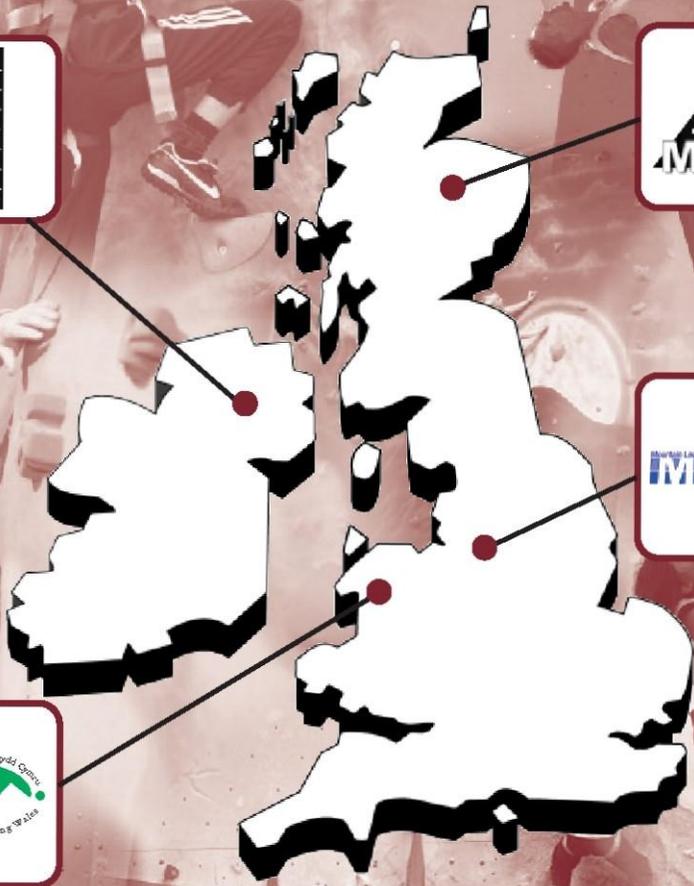
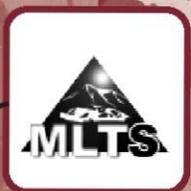
<p>SUPERVISION</p> <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>assess the abilities of individuals to lead routes and belay lead climbers</i> • <i>plan individual sessions and programmes of activities with appropriate objectives</i> • <i>understand and introduce progressive coaching activities to ensure development of appropriate knowledge, skills and experience</i> • <i>have built in flexibility when planning activities in order to respond to changing circumstances</i> • <i>demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to the wall management, authorising organisations, parents, guardians, group members and other wall users</i> 		
<p>Managing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>carry out dynamic risk assessments throughout each lead climbing session</i> • <i>demonstrate safe and responsible management of students irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved in the climbing activity</i> • <i>make appropriate judgements regarding the suitability of various techniques for instructing and coaching the skills required for individuals to belay lead climbers and lead climb effectively</i> • <i>demonstrate an understanding of how to avoid and deal with common lead climbing problems</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>manage students effectively by</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>good communication skills</i> - <i>setting and reviewing targets.</i> - <i>Identifying and reacting to the needs of students in relation to the development of lead climbing skills</i> - <i>supervise climbers belaying and leading</i> 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<i>deliver technical instruction to students including</i> -<i>demonstration of effective use of chosen belay device</i> -<i>principles of appropriate route choice</i> -<i>use of running belays on routes with and without extenders in place</i> -<i>communication between leader and belayer</i> -<i>falling and holding a fall</i> -<i>lowering to the ground</i> •<i>manage time appropriately in relation to the plan, activity and conditions</i> 		
<p>Movement skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<i>advise, demonstrate and coach students in climbing movement skills relevant to lead climbing</i> •<i>demonstrate the use of appropriate climbing and non-climbing activities to develop lead climbing techniques</i> 		

Climbing Wall Leading Award

Assessment Checklist

	Done
Be at least 18 years of age	
Have maintained this logbook in accordance with the BOS guidelines	
Completed all personal details on the appropriate pages	
Be a current member of Mountaineering Ireland (individual or club)	
Obtained a valid first aid certificate and included a copy within	
Completed all aspects of CWLA training and provided evidence within	
Have a completed and signed reference page	
Have gained further relevant experience	
Be proficient in the use of a wide variety of climbing walls	
Have belayed a lead climber on at least 100 routes	
Have recorded a minimum of 100 lead climbs, at least 50 of which must be at grade F6a or above	
Have assisted or observed at at least 5 teaching leading sessions delivered by a suitably qualified person	



Mount in Leader Training

Hyffordd i.Arweinydd Mynydd

.£5.00