



Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI) Overview (Formerly Single Pitch Award (SPA))



Before you start:

Before registration, candidates must be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- Are you at least 18 years old?
- Are you a member of one of the mountaineering councils; Mountaineering Ireland, Mountaineering Scotland, the British Mountaineering Council?
- Do you have a minimum of one year's indoor and rock climbing experience?
- Have you lead at least 15 graded rock climbs with traditional leader placed protection?
- Have you lead at least 15 routes at a climbing wall?
- Have you lead at least 5 which must be outdoor bolt protected sport climbs?

Registration and Logbook

Once you have satisfied the above, register with Mountaineering Ireland for the Rock Climbing Instructor Award. A digital logbook will be provided. This logbook is a vital link between the candidate, Mountaineering Ireland, and the training provider and provides a clear record of candidates' climbing experience and activity, their fulfilment of the requirements of the scheme, and course attendance. The logbook must be kept up-to-date and be submitted or shared when booking places on courses. The training/assessment course director will monitor the logbooks on behalf of Mountaineering Ireland. Once you have registered and have access to your log book, you can book a training course directly with one our approved providers

Training

Rock Climbing Instructor training courses are held over a minimum of 3 days (24 hours) and comprise a mixture of indoor lectures/discussions and outdoor practical sessions. Topics covered on the Rock Climbing Instructor training syllabus will include:

Technical Competence (such as equipment, anchors, belaying, abseiling, and personal climbing skills, background knowledge),

Management and Decision making including planning, organising, managing other staff, managing participants, knowledge and demonstration of techniques,

Teaching Skills,

The Climbing Environment including etiquette, access, conservation and ethics.

The ratio for Rock Climbing Instructor training is a maximum of one instructor to 4 candidates.

Consolidation

The period between training and assessment varies in length for each person and is an opportunity to develop your skills, paying particular attention to any weaknesses identified during your training course. So, go climbing and use your enthusiasm to hone your skills for as long as you like.

Mountaineering Ireland recommends that all, but the most experienced candidates allow a minimum of 6 months between training and assessment.

Between training and assessment, candidates are required to complete and log an absolute minimum of:

- 40 climbs outdoors, on leader placement protection.
- 20 of these must be at least Severe grade or above and they should be on as wide a range of venues as possible.
- They must be proficient in outdoor in the use of climbing walls and have a minimum of 30 climbing wall leads graded at F4 or above.
- They must be proficient in outdoor bolted climbing and have a minimum of 10 sport climb leads graded at F4 or above.
- They must also have assisted in the supervision of 20 instructed climbing sessions at a variety of locations, with 10 of these sessions being on outdoor crags and 10 on indoor climbing walls. A session is a half day or evening. At least 5 of these sessions must have personal reflective comments recorded in the logbook.
- Candidates would also benefit from gaining bouldering experience both as an individual and in a supervisory capacity prior to assessment.
- For any leader, first aid is an essential skill. Prior to undertaking Rock Climbing Instructor assessment, therefore, candidates must also hold a current, relevant first aid qualification, which involves 16 hours of training and an element of assessment.

Assessment

Rock Climbing Instructor assessment takes place over 2 days, and also includes evening sessions. Candidates will be tested in all aspects of the syllabus by an approved assessor. The ratio is 1 instructor to 4 candidates for Rock Climbing Instructor assessment. Visit the course calendar to see when the next assessment is running and contact the provider directly to book on to the assessment.

Written tests of some form may also be given in advance of, or during, assessment. They will not determine the final result but will aid the assessors when considering the choice of tasks to be set in the course. Written papers are likely to focus on areas of the syllabus which include the crag environment and knowledge of the sport.

What next?

Once you have registered, contact one of our approved providers directly for more information, costs and to start your Rock Climbing Instructor training. Rock Climbing Instructor training is held

around the country on a regular basis. Visit our course calendar to see when and where courses are running. Please note that courses are priced by the individual provider.

Support & Development

Join the **Mountain Training Association** and be part of a community of like-minded people on our schemes. The Association offers a range of workshops for trainees and qualified leaders and coaches across the disciplines, as well as a quarterly magazine, gear deals/discounts, a monthly newsletter and an insurance deal. You can join the Association at any point after you have registered on one of Mountain Training's leadership/coaching schemes.

The Book – Rock Climbing

Rock Climbing has been written for people working their way through the climbing schemes and it's packed with colourful diagrams, photographs and simple language. It covers the full spectrum of modern climbing practice including movement skills, knots, bouldering, sport, trad, and indoor climbing as well as risk management and problem solving. This book is available in the shop on the Mountaineering Ireland website.

The Videos

Please check out the **Skills Videos** on the Mountaineering Ireland website and youtube channel.

The Scope of the Scheme

A qualified instructor can:

- Teach climbing skills
- Take people climbing, bouldering and abseiling.
- Manage groups safely in these activities.

For the purposes of this scheme, a single pitch route is one which:

- Is climbed without intermediate stances.
- Is described as single pitch in the guidebook.
- Allows climbers to be lowered to the ground at all times.
- Is non-tidal, non-serious and has little objective danger.
- Presents no difficulties on approach or retreat, such as route finding, scrambling or navigating.

It will be the responsibility of the employer or organising authority to develop management strategies for the employment of award holders outwith this remit.

If you are in doubt about a particular venue the officers of Mountain training, Mountaineering Instructors or members of the British Mountain Guides association are the appropriate people to approach for advice.

It is the duty of the employer or organising authority to decide whether a leader possesses the personal attributes needed to take responsibility for the care of young people and beginners. It is the combination of technical skills, wide experience and personal qualities that forms the basis for effective supervision. This scheme assesses the technical skills and experience; the employer or organising authority must gauge the personal qualities.

The scheme **does not cover**:

- General mountaineering skills, such as those needed to approach and return from remote mountain and moorland crags.
- Multi-pitch rock climbing skills, the teaching or supervision of leading, (these are covered by the Mountain Instructor Scheme)
- Access to tidal sea cliffs or any other location where escape is not easily possible.
- The gauging of a candidate's personal qualities.