



Climbing Wall Instructor Skills Checklist

Introduction

This skills checklist is designed to enable you, as a Climbing Wall Instructor candidate, to both record what you have covered as your training progresses e.g. as a technical diary and, at the close of your course, reflect on the syllabus topics covered during your training allowing you to rate yourself using the 'learning stage' described below.

It is hoped that this process will then assist you in completing your action plan (which you can share and discuss with your course director at your end of course debrief) which will guide you in consolidating and developing your experience and skills post training and pre-assessment.

When reflecting you might find it useful to refer back to the Climbing Wall Instructor Handbook. In addition the Mountain Training publication – "Rock Climbing" – details many of the techniques that might be used by a Climbing Wall Instructor holder and will be useful for refreshing your memory of specific techniques or skills covered at training.

How to appraise yourself

The syllabus is broken down into headings. Against each competency you can give yourself a 'learning stage' number – each number 1-3 corresponds with a description as detailed below. Learning stage 3 would very broadly equate with the degree of competency you'd expect from a qualified and experienced Climbing Wall Instructor holder.

Learning stage descriptions

Cognitive or understanding phase (learning stage 1)

In the first stage of learning performances are inconsistent and success is not guaranteed. Performing the skill requires all of the candidate's attention and so they rely on the trainer for cues. This is a process of trial and error. Correct performances must be reinforced through external feedback.

Associative or verbal motor phase (learning stage 2)

Performances are becoming more consistent as knowledge and skills are being formed. While the simpler parts of the performance now look fluent and are well learned, the more complex elements require most of the candidate's spare attention. The candidate is starting to get a sense of internal 'kinaesthetic' and 'cognitive' feedback when they perform or apply a skill well. They are starting to detect and correct their own errors.

Autonomous or motor phase (learning stage 3)

In the final stage of learning, performances have become consistent, fluid and 'unconsciously competent'. The knowledge and skills involved are well learned and stored in the long-term memory. There is now spare attention which can be focused on group members and adapting appropriate leadership approaches and techniques as applied to situations. To retain the new skill at this level, it must be regularly practiced to reinforce the motor and cognitive programmes.

Technical competence

Climbing Wall Instructors will have a sound knowledge of climbing. They will be able to identify and evaluate commonly used indoor climbing equipment and demonstrate its use to individuals during a climbing session. They will be personally competent in a range of indoor climbing techniques and be able to provide clear demonstration and effective tuition to novice climbers. Climbing Wall Instructors will be able to provide effective supervision and safe management of climbing participants. They will be able to:

1 Equipment	Learning stage	Notes
1.1. Select and fit suitable climbing equipment for personal and group use.		
1.2. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of personal climbing equipment and ensure appropriate use, care and maintenance in line with manufacturers' guidance.		
1.3. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of climbing wall equipment and ensure appropriate use of:		
1.3.1. In-situ ropes.		
1.3.2. Auto-belays.		
1.3.3. Fixed matting.		
1.3.4. Holds.		
1.3.5. Anchors/lower offs and fixed equipment.		
2 Belaying	Learning stage	Notes
2.1. Tie into the rope. Attach group members to the rope.		
2.2. Demonstrate the use of direct and indirect belay systems, and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		
2.3. Set up bottom rope systems and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		
2.4. Demonstrate the skills of a competent belayer including holding falls and controlling lowers.		
2.5. Supervise others belaying.		
3 Personal climbing skills	Learning stage	Notes
3.1. Choose and lead routes suited to personal ability (minimum French 4).		

3.2. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the safety chain and fall factors.		
3.3. Move with confidence on appropriate routes and boulder problems.		
4 Background knowledge		
	Learning stage	Notes
4.1. Describe an awareness of the history, traditions and ethics of climbing in the UK and Ireland.		
4.2. Describe the role and philosophy of Mountain Training and its schemes, the mountaineering councils, climbing clubs and the NICAS/NIBAS schemes.		
4.3. Describe the development of climbing walls in the UK and Ireland.		
4.4. Describe the structure of competition climbing.		
4.5. Describe the grading systems used in the UK and Ireland.		
Management and decision making		
Climbing Wall Instructors should be able to independently organise, plan, manage and deliver sessions to a wide range of participants, from novices to experienced climbers, often with support from an assistant. They should be able to:		
5 Planning and structure of sessions	Learning stage	Notes
5.1. Plan individual sessions and programmes of activities with appropriate aims and objectives.		
5.2. Demonstrate flexibility when planning activities; respond to changing circumstances.		
5.3. Demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to any authorising organisation, parents/guardians, individual group members, the group as a whole and other site users.		
5.4. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of weather when climbing on artificial structures.		
5.5. Be aware of Mountain Training's National Guidelines.		
6. Management of Participants		
	Learning stage	Notes
6.1. Select appropriate management techniques to safeguard all participants,		

irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved in the climbing activity.		
6.2. Utilise effective communication skills to:		
6.2.1. Set and review targets.		
6.2.2. Identify and react to the needs of the group in relation to involvement, interest, enjoyment and achievement.		
6.3. Demonstrate an understanding of warming up and injury avoidance techniques.		
6.4. Brief individuals and the group appropriately.		
6.5. Manage time appropriately in relation to the plan, activity and conditions.		
6.6. Avoid common roped climbing problems.		
6.7 Solve common problems if they occur.		
6.8 In the case of an incident describe how to call for relevant assistance.		
6.9 Communicate with the group and individuals to identify whether anyone has an injury or disability that may require reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to participate in the session.		
7. Decision Making		
	Learning stage	Notes
7.1 Demonstrate dynamic risk assessments throughout a climbing session.		
7.2 Assess the abilities and objectives of the group participating in the session.		
8. Knowledge and demonstration of techniques		
	Learning stage	Notes
8.1. Deliver technical instruction to individuals and the group including:		
8.1.1. Choice and fitting of suitable harnesses.		
8.1.2. Attaching the rope to the harness.		
8.1.3. Effective belaying.		
8.2. Demonstrate the use of bouldering activities with groups, using appropriate games and activities, including setting simple boulder problems.		

8.3. Teach and demonstrate basic climbing movement skills.		
8.4. Supervise a group of novice climbers in the following activities:		
8.4.1. Belaying and tying-in.		
8.4.2. Climbing (including bouldering).		
9. Managing/supervising other staff		
	Learning stage	Notes
9.1. Explain the role and scope of an assistant. Describe the opportunities and liabilities presented by using an assistant in a session.		
9.2. Manage an assistant.		
Teaching and learning skills		
Climbing Wall Instructors will frequently need to give tuition and support to a range of climbers from novices to experienced practitioners in a range of climbing related techniques. They should be able to:		
	Learning stage	Notes
10. Teaching and learning skills		
10.1. Create and maintain a positive learning environment for all participants.		
10.2. Communicate effectively and appropriately with a group and individuals, checking for understanding.		
10.3. Demonstrate an ability to adapt the teaching style to meet group needs.		
10.4. Help participants develop a positive attitude towards climbing and introduce the idea of lifelong participation.		
10.5. Identify and use appropriate tasks to develop effective and safe climbers.		
10.6. Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for evaluating a session and success of the outcome.		
The climbing environment		
Climbing Wall Instructors should be informed and experienced in the indoor climbing wall environment, including both small and large scale (commercial) venues. They should be able to:		
	Learning stage	Notes
11. Access		
11.1. Explain an awareness of both general and locally important rules and regulations, and demonstrate an ability to obtain and comply with this information.		
12. Etiquette and ethics	Learning stage	Notes

12.1. Describe your responsibilities to the general public, other facility users and the wider climbing community.		
12.2. Operate a flexible programme of activities in order to accommodate other site or facility users.		
12.3. Describe the hazards presented to other site users by the actions of a group, and act in such a way that these are minimised.		

Climbing Wall Instructor Abseil module

This module is optional and is designed to equip Climbing Wall Instructors with the skills and techniques required for managing top-roping and abseiling groups on purpose-built artificial climbing walls and structures. Awareness of the skills outlined in the main Climbing Wall Instructor syllabus is assumed and not repeated here.

Technical competence		
Climbing Wall Instructors will be able to identify and evaluate commonly used top-roping and abseiling equipment and demonstrate its use to individuals during a top-roping/abseil session. They will be personally competent in a range of indoor climbing techniques used in top-roping and abseiling sessions and be able to provide clear demonstration and effective tuition to novice climbers. Climbing Wall Instructors will be able to provide effective supervision and safe management of climbing participants engaged in top-roping and abseiling sessions. They will be able to:		
1. Equipment	Learning stage	Notes
1.1. Select and fit suitable climbing equipment for top-roping and abseiling.		
1.2. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of personal abseiling equipment and ensure appropriate use, care and maintenance in line with manufacturers' guidance.		
1.3. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of climbing wall equipment and ensure appropriate use of:		
1.3.1. In-situ ropes.		
1.3.2. Anchors/lower offs and fixed equipment.		
2. Belaying	Learning Stage	Notes
2.1. Tie into the rope. Attach group members to the rope with and without a karabiner.		
2.2. Demonstrate the use of direct and indirect belay systems at the top of a climbing wall, and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		

2.3. Set up top-rope systems and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		
2.4. Hold falls and control lowers.		
2.5. Supervise others belaying.		
2.6. Attach self and others to the belay system and abseil ropes.		
3. Abseiling	Learning Stage	Notes
3.1. Abseil without requiring a back-up safety rope.		
3.2. Demonstrate methods of safeguarding a novice abseiling.		
3.3. Utilise belay points for both abseil and safety ropes.		
3.4. Use common devices for abseiling competently and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		
3.5. Demonstrate techniques for managing the safety of participants at the top of walls.		

Management and decision making

Climbing Wall Instructors should be able to independently organise, plan, manage and deliver top-roping and/or abseil sessions to a wide range of participants, from novices to experienced climbers, often with support from an assistant. They should be able to:

4. Planning and structure of session	Learning Stage	Notes
4.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of weather when abseiling on artificial structures.		
5. Management of participants	Learning Stage	Notes
5.1 Select appropriate management techniques to safeguard all participants, irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved with the abseiling activity.		
5.2 Utilise effective communication skills to identify and react to the needs of the group in relation to involvement, interest, enjoyment and achievement.		
5.3 Manage the safety of those arriving at the top of a wall.		
5.4 Brief individuals and the group appropriately.		
5.5 Avoid common abseiling problems.		
5.6 Deal with common abseiling problems if they occur.		

6. Managing/supervising other staff	Learning Stage	Notes
6.1. Describe the role and scope of an assistant. Describe the opportunities and liabilities presented by using an assistant in a session.		
6.2. Manage an assistant.		
7. Decision making	Learning Stage	Notes
7.1. Carry out dynamic risk assessments throughout each abseiling session.		
8. Knowledge and demonstration of techniques	Learning Stage	Notes
8.1. Deliver technical abseiling instruction to individuals and the group.		
Teaching and learning skills		
Climbing Wall Instructors will frequently need to give tuition and support to a range of climbers from novices to experienced practitioners in basic top-roping and/or abseiling techniques. They should be able to:		
9. Teaching and learning skills	Learning Stage	Notes
9.1. Communicate effectively and appropriately with a group and individuals, checking for understanding.		
9.2. Explain the reasons for evaluating a session and success of the outcome.		

Appendix:

Assessment requirements

Before you book onto a Climbing Wall Instructor assessment, make sure you have done the following:

- You must be at least 18 years old
- You must have attended a Climbing Wall Instructor (or Climbing Wall Award) training course (or have been granted exemption)
- You must be familiar with the syllabus
- You must have logged a minimum of 30 visits to at least three different climbing walls (you will be expected to lead French grade 4 climbs on your assessment – refer to the Handbook).
- You must have led a minimum of 40 climbs on indoor walls.
- You must have assisted in the supervision of at least 15 instructed sessions on at least two different walls including a large public facility in a variety of contexts. At least five of these sessions must have personal reflective comments recorded on DLOG.
- You must hold a current first aid certificate, minimum 8 hours and relevant to your work as a Climbing Wall Instructor.

The Climbing Wall Instructor assessment is a minimum of 6 hours.



Climbing Wall Instructor ACTION PLAN

What is the timescale for doing your assessment?	
How many visits to climbing walls have you logged? At assessment you should have a minimum of thirty visits to three different climbing walls.	
Have you assisted with the supervision of 15 instructed sessions on at least two different walls including a large public facility in a variety of contexts?	
Have you led a minimum of 40 climbs? How many climbs at French Grade 4 have you led?	
List three syllabus areas that you feel/think particularly confident or practised in.	
List three syllabus areas that you feel/think require further practice.	
What opportunities can you foresee for gaining experience to develop your Climbing Wall Instructor skillset?	
Given your answers to the above briefly outline your way forward for becoming a Climbing Wall Instructor holder?	