

Mountaineering Ireland – Competence Progression Pathway

Mountaineering Ireland (MI) support, advise, and work with Student Mountaineering Clubs (SMC's) so that they can partake in their activities safely and sustainably. MI encourage SMC's to manage their own clubs' activities, where students are safely teaching and leading other students in climbing and hiking activities. MI recommends that club leaders are sufficiently trained by Technical Advisors (TA) / Technical Experts (TE) as detailed below.

The following information is a broad example of how SMC's may operate. For further information, please see each individual SMC's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's). MI has compiled a Student Clubs Framework document, which is a general guidance working document for the development of SMC's own SOP's. Each club is unique; with different needs, contexts and resources, and therefore each club's SOP's will reflect this. All parties must have read and agreed to the SOP's, which need to be approved between the SMC, TA/TE and the Sports Development Officer.

Implementation Period

Given that each SMC is at a different stage of their development, and has varying skill levels within the club membership, and considering the limitations on time and resources; it is intended that MI's recommended approach for SMC's may take 3-4 years to be fully implemented.

Club Activities

SMC's may undertake the following activities which all come under the term 'Mountaineering':

1. Climbing
2. Hiking
3. Mountaineering

Each activity can be further sub divided into the following activities:

Climbing	Hiking	Mountaineering
Indoor / Outdoor Bouldering	Level 1*	Scrambling
Indoor Bottom-rope climbing	Level 2*	Winter Climbing
Indoor Lead climbing	Level 3*	Alpine Climbing
Outdoor Bottom & top-rope climbing		
Outdoor Lead climbing - Sport / Trad (<i>Higher level skills</i>) <i>Bottom and Top-Rope Rigging (Higher level skills)</i>		

Note:

**For hiking, this does not include times when snow and ice prevail, and travel requires the skills and equipment needed to cope with the special hazards of winter conditions.*

Demonstrating Competency

Mountain Training sets out that competence can be described as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely. While emphasising that formal qualifications are the ideal, Mountain Training UK & Ireland, and MI, recognise four ways to demonstrate competence. These are:

1. To hold the relevant National qualification;
2. To hold an equivalent qualification;
3. To have received appropriate In-House Training and Assessment;
4. To be competent through relevant and comprehensive experience.

In-House Training and Accreditation – Technical Advisor (TA) / Technical Expert (TE)

In conjunction with and overseen by an appropriate TA/TE, MI supports In-House training and assessment for SMC's as an acceptable pathway to competence. A TA/TE is an appropriately qualified instructor with the relevant

National qualifications, expertise and experience who can provide guidance, formal and informal training and assessment, to ensure safety, compliance, and best practices in outdoor and indoor activities.

The TA/TE is central in designing the In-House syllabus for the club and overseeing the In-House Training, Assessment and its one to two-year revalidation within the club. Good planning and management of the clubs' activities, and accurate record keeping of the club members participation and progression is fundamental to the success of the In-House system.

- Leadership training: TA/TE delivers in-house or NGB courses to produce Competent Leaders.
- Personal skills training can be delivered by: A Competent Leader (In-House or NGB award holder) who runs sessions within their scope, or by persons deemed competent by the TA/TE.

Participant Competency

To aid in the planning and delivery of club activities, club members can be defined as:

- Novice Participant
This person lacks the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge, therefore lacking the ability to safely partake in an activity independently. All Novice participants must be accompanied by a Competent Leader when partaking in club activities.
- Competent Participant
This person has a combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge, which allows them to safely partake in an activity independently. They must never act alone within club activities, and they have undergone the process for assessing participant competence by a Competent Leader.
- Competent Leader
This person has a combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge, which allows them the ability to act as a Leader of Novice Participants in a club activity. They may have been a Competent Participant, who then gained additional experience, training, assessment and revalidation from the club's TA/TE to become a Competent Leader. Competent Leaders may also be referred to as Supervisors, Instructors, Coaches, Activity Leaders or Hike Leaders. Up to a certain technical level, Competent Leaders train and assess novice participants to become Competent Participants.

Levels of Activity within SMC's

- Non-Led / Peer-to-Peer activities: The activity is operated on the basis that all the participants are at a level of competent skill; hence, individuals are responsible for themselves and no one person has overall responsibility for the safety or welfare of the group.
- Led activity: An activity where participants are yet to become competent to partake in their activity independently.
- Training activities:
 - Leadership: Run by a TA/TE or approved training provider with the intention of delivering, coaching or instructing new skills/knowledge during the activity, and assessing students' skills and knowledge to become Competent Leaders.
 - Personal: Run by the above person, or by appropriate persons to run such activities. (Movement skills, S+C etc.)

Pathway to Competency

The diagram below illustrates the cycle of how a Novice Participant can progress to become a Competent Participant, allowing them to partake in their activity independently. As a Competent Participant, and with the TA/TE, they can further progress to become a Competent Leader which allows them to lead, train and in some instances assess Novices, which completes the cycle. Competent Participants can also progress to Mountaineering / Higher level skills along with the TA/TE, or an appropriately qualified instructor or guide.

Initial Start-Up: This is for new clubs that are starting up, whose members have no prior experience with the activities. The aim of this 'Start-Up' is to produce Competent Participants. Once there are Competent Participants in the club, then the 'Typical Pathway' can begin.

Typical Pathway to Competency: Once the club has Competent Participants, the pathway can work in a self-perpetuating manner.

Mountaineering and Higher Level Skills: Competent Participants can then progress to Mountaineering, and Higher level skills such as Top-Rope Rigging and Lead climbing in Sport or Trad Climbing.

Pathway to Competency Diagram

