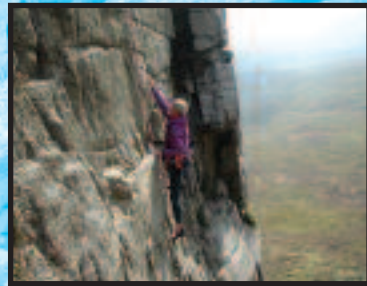


Single Pitch Award Handbook



For those who wish to supervise groups on the
single pitch crags and walls of the
United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

Participation Statement

Mountain Leader Training (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.

Acknowledgements

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Prepared by the officers and the administrative staff of MLTUK, MLTE, MLTNI, MLTS and MLTW.

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Preface

Many of us began rock climbing on single pitch crags. The accessibility, the relatively defined nature and the less serious atmosphere often means that such outcrop routes are ideal for beginners and natural places to introduce others to rock climbing.

Increasingly, however, indoor facilities such as climbing walls are used as a means of introduction to climbing. These can allow a high level of performance to be developed prior to venturing out on natural rock. Both indoor and outdoor venues are now available for novices to start rock climbing.

The number of organised groups enjoying rock climbing and abseiling on outcrops, crags, quarries and climbing walls has risen over many years. Mountain Leader Training (MLTUK and the home nation Training Boards: MLTE, MLTNI, MLTS and MLTW) is concerned to ensure that high standards of supervision are maintained, so that both enjoyment and safety are enhanced without compromising either the sport or the participation of others. High standards are achieved through experience, personal qualities, training and validation.

This handbook provides advice for anyone involved in taking groups single pitch rock climbing and particularly for candidates working their way through the Single Pitch Award (SPA) scheme. It is designed to support the knowledge and experience of candidates, trainers and assessors without prescribing methods. There are many technical manuals, developed by climbers, which will continue to illustrate evolving techniques and these notes are designed to complement such literature (see Appendix 4).

The booklet is divided into four parts:

- Prospectus that explains the way you progress through the Single Pitch Award scheme from registration to assessment.
- Syllabus that lists the skills of a single pitch supervisor.
- Guidance Notes that help advise candidates and their trainers and assessors of protocols and procedures.
- Appendices that provide background information.

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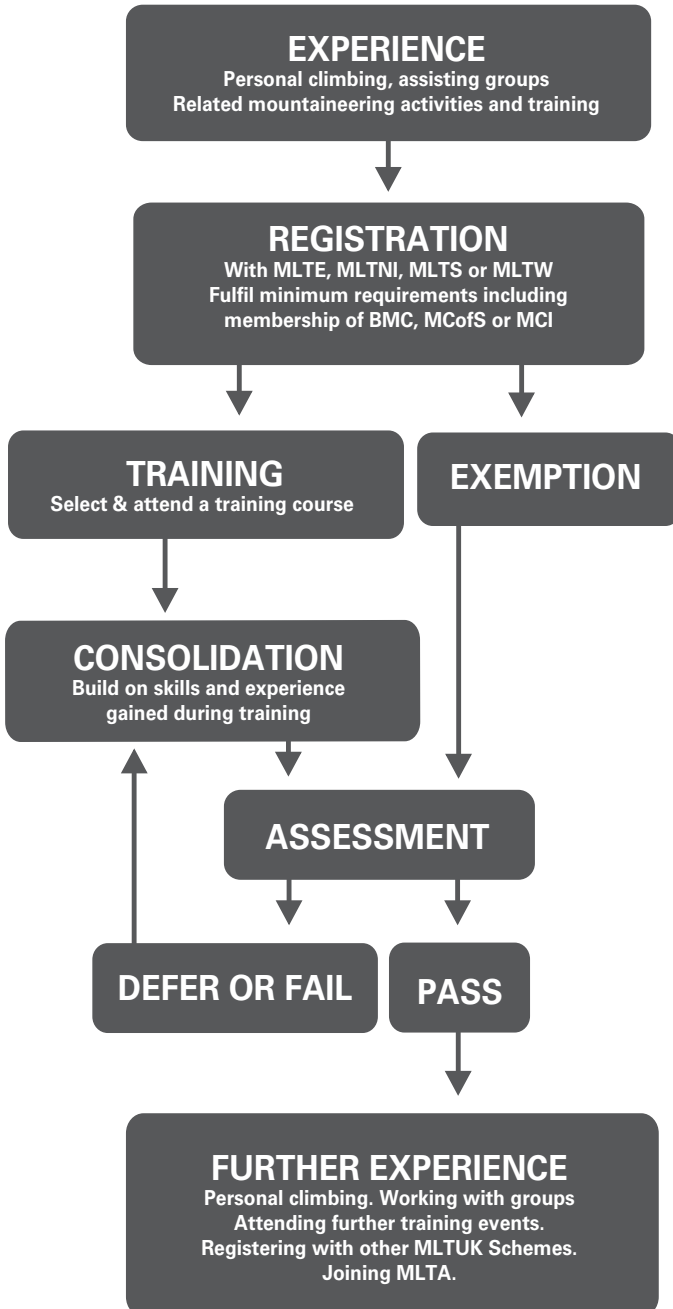
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Progression through the SPA Scheme



Experience Requirements

Please consider the advice given below. You should note that the figures given are absolute minimums and that most successful candidates have well in excess of the experience outlined:

- To be involved in the SPA scheme you need to be a rock climber and have an interest in the supervision of novices in the activity. A minimum of 12 months rock climbing experience is required.
- Before attending a training course you must first register with one of the four Mountain Leader Training Boards. This will provide you with a logbook and your personal details will be entered on the national database.
- You must have led at least 15 climbs outdoors on routes where the protection is leader-placed. Without having done at least this amount of leading you are unlikely to play a constructive part on the course or be able to make best use of the training.
- Between training and assessment you must consolidate new ideas and techniques and gain additional climbing experience. Your trainer will advise you about the amount and nature of the personal climbing and supervising experience you should gain.
- Candidates should not present themselves for assessment until they have:
 1. led a minimum of 40 climbs, outdoors on leader-placed protection. A substantial number of these must be at least Severe grade and they should be on a variety of rock types.
 2. assisted with the supervision of climbing for approximately 20 sessions at a variety of locations, some outside and some indoors (a session is a half day or evening).



Photo: Andy Say

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The number of organised groups enjoying rock climbing and abseiling on outcrops, crags, quarries and climbing walls has multiplied in recent years. MLT is concerned that high standards of supervision are maintained, so that both enjoyment and safety are enhanced, without compromising either the sport of climbing or the participation of other crag or wall users. High standards of supervision and organisation are best achieved through experience, personal qualities, training and validation.
- 1.2 This scheme has been designed to provide a level of basic competence for those who are in a position of responsibility during single pitch rock climbing activities. Whilst the award does include some elements of personal competence it is not designed as a measure of such. It should not be used as either an entry requirement or measure of suitability for individuals who wish to climb on climbing walls or crags.

2 Scope of the scheme

- 2.1 The scheme is for those who are in a position of responsibility during single pitch rock climbing activities. It is primarily concerned with good practice, leading to the safe and quiet enjoyment of the activity. Completion of a training course alone, without passing the assessment course, is not a qualification in itself, although it may be of considerable personal benefit to the trainee.
- 2.2 It is valid throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland (MLTUK National Guidelines 2004) and is recognised by the Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme.
- 2.3 For the purposes of this scheme, a single pitch route is one which:
 - is climbed without intermediate stances.

- is described as a 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.

The majority of these routes must be in the UK and Ireland.

- 2.4 It will be the responsibility of the employer or organising authority to develop management strategies for the employment of award holders outwith this remit.
- 2.5 If you are in doubt about a particular venue then the officers of Mountain Leader Training, Mountaineering Instructors or members of the British Association of Mountain Guides are the appropriate people to approach for advice.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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 Mountaineering 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.

3 Stages in the Scheme

The scheme consists of six stages:

- 3.1 Gain personal rock climbing experience.
- 3.2 Register and join a mountaineering council or an affiliated mountaineering or climbing club and be issued with a logbook.
- 3.3 Attend a training course (minimum two days and 20 hours contact time with the trainers).
- 3.4 Consolidate experience.
- 3.5 Attend an assessment course (minimum two days and 20 hours contact time with the assessors).
- 3.6 Continue to gain and record experience and any relevant additional training.

4 Registration

- 4.1 To register you should have a genuine interest in rock climbing and the supervision of groups on single pitch crags. You should have at least twelve months rock climbing experience and be at least eighteen years of age.
- 4.2 You should be an individual or club member of a mountaineering council.
- 4.3 Candidates with particular requirements or special needs may wish to contact Mountain Leader Training staff for advice and guidance (see Appendix 3).
- 4.4 Candidates should allow up to fifteen working days for their application to be processed and returned.
- 4.5 On receipt of the registration form and appropriate fee, the home nation Training Board will issue a logbook. Candidates' personal details and progression through the scheme will be recorded on the national Mountain Leader Training database.

5 Training

- 5.1 Before attending a training course, candidates must be registered on the Single Pitch Award scheme (see 4 above) and must have led at least 15 graded rock climbs outdoors on routes where the protection is leader placed.
- 5.2 Training courses are run by approved course Providers who are either Mountaineering Instructors or Mountain Guides. The courses are at least two days long and include evening sessions (minimum of 20 hours contact time with the trainer). Training courses run with a minimum of four candidates and a maximum of eight. The maximum candidate/trainer ratio is 4:1. Larger courses have dual benefits: the varied experience of the candidates enables individuals to have a better chance of evaluating their own skill level and they also get the opinion of two trainers. Lists of all approved Providers are available from Mountain Leader Training.
- 5.3 The training course is for potential leaders and assumes basic competence as a rock climber with experience of leading climbs (see Experience Requirements on page 6). It will emphasise those skills which candidates might have difficulty in learning without expert guidance. A few minor aspects of the syllabus may not be covered during the training course and candidates are expected to deal with these items themselves.
- 5.4 The Course Directors will give oral comments to each candidate and will endorse the training course report page of the logbook with comments about the programme, crags and walls used and conditions encountered. Candidates will receive individual recommendations for the consolidation period. The training course does not involve any written reports concerning the performance or standard of candidates. An approved sticker will be put on the endorsement page of the logbook by the Course Director and will show the date and course Provider number specific to the trainer. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to register during the course, but the trainer is obliged to submit a report to their Training Board containing all registered candidates' details within 30 days.

- 5.5 Candidates are encouraged to use the skills checklist in the logbook to evaluate their current skills and to plan with their trainers their particular route towards assessment.
- 5.6 Mountain Leader Training maintains close links with every Provider through reports submitted after each course. There is also a rolling programme of visits to courses, and you may meet a moderator on your course. These visits not only maintain parity between Providers but also provide a link between you and MLT.

6 Logbook

- 6.1 Experience gained by candidates should be recorded in the logbook. Entries should be concise, easily read and should include all rock climbing and other relevant experience.
- 6.2 The logbook is divided into five sections:
- Personal details, contents and endorsement pages
 - Course reports and personal profile
 - Personal and group leading/supervising experience
 - Experience requirements, definitions, sample pages and skills checklist
 - Additional training information
- 6.3 The logbook is designed to help you demonstrate your previous experience to others. You must fill it in before a training course to enable the trainers to discuss your particular needs and to agree which areas of the syllabus you need to concentrate on before taking an assessment. Few of us can remember every detail of every climb we have done, but this is no reason to avoid using the logbook. List examples of the variety of experiences you have gained and give details of the most notable (or exciting) days out. The information you give does not have to be verified by a third party but will form the basis for discussion at training and assessment.

7 Consolidation Period

Candidates will generally see many new ideas and techniques during training and will therefore need some time to practise and evaluate these before taking the assessment. During this period of consolidation, candidates are advised to climb at as wide a range of venues as possible, both as an individual and when assisting the supervision of others. MLT recommends that all but the most experienced candidates allow a minimum of six months between training and assessment. There is currently no time limit on the validity of a training course and some candidates may take several years to complete the award.

8 Assessment

- 8.1 Before attending an assessment course, candidates should:
- have registered.
 - have attended a training course or been granted exemption from training.
 - have gained further experience (see Experience Requirements on page 6).
 - be proficient in the use of climbing walls.
 - be competently leading Severe grade climbs on outdoor crags with leader-placed protection.
 - have led a minimum of 40 climbs on outdoor crags on leader-placed protection at a

variety of venues.

- hold a valid first aid certificate.

- 8.2 During the assessment course, which is two days long and includes evening sessions, candidates will be tested in accordance with the syllabus requirements. The assessment takes 20 hours (often a concentrated weekend) and is run by an approved course Provider who is either a Mountaineering Instructor or a Mountain Guide. Lists of all approved Providers are available from the Training Boards.
- 8.3 Assessors work on a ratio of 1:4. The overall course size can range from two candidates to eight. Larger courses have dual benefits: the varied experience of the candidates provides individuals with better opportunities for comparing skills whilst ensuring that each candidate receives the opinion of two assessors.
- 8.4 The Course Director will endorse the logbook in one of three ways:
- Pass:** where satisfactory knowledge and application of the syllabus and the necessary experience, skills, knowledge and attributes were demonstrated. The Course Director issues a pass page and numbered sticker.
- Defer:** where the performance was generally up to standard but complete proficiency was not attained in some aspects of the syllabus. Some form of re-assessment will be required.
- Fail:** where the performance has been generally weak or the necessary experience and attributes have not been shown. Further training may be recommended before another complete assessment is taken.
- 8.5 In all cases the results will be discussed with candidates and recorded in their logbooks (the page is inserted by the Course Director/Provider). Candidates who are deferred or failed will receive specific written feedback, including an action plan. This will include the reasons for the result, recommendations on the additional experience needed and details of the timing and format for subsequent re-assessment.
- 8.6 In considering the decision of the assessors, candidates are asked to listen to all elements of the final interview and, wherever possible, to raise any concerns at that time. If, on reflection, the discussion and the written report do not fit the candidates' impression of the assessment and their performance, then they should contact the Course Director/Provider for additional clarification, in writing if necessary.
- 8.7 In the case of a deferral, candidates are encouraged to return to the original assessment Provider but can be re-assessed by any assessment Provider approved by Mountain Leader Training. Practical re-assessments cannot take place within three months of the initial assessment. All deferrals must be completed within five years of the original assessment. Only two re-assessments are permitted before having to take the entire assessment again.

9 Exemption from Training

- 9.1 Experienced climbers who already have substantial personal climbing experience and experience of supervising groups on single pitch cliffs and climbing walls may apply to the Secretary of their home nation Training Board to be exempted from attendance at a training course. There is no exemption from assessment.
- 9.2 Before applying for exemption, candidates should consider the following points:
- The training course is not a personal skills climbing course. It introduces candidates to the skills necessary for supervising novices on single pitch rock climbs.
 - It includes material that might be unfamiliar to even experienced climbers.
- 9.3 Candidates applying for exemption should:
- be registered with the specific scheme.
 - complete an exemption application form.
 - submit a copy of the completed logbook experience pages with the exemption application form and fee to the appropriate home nation Training Board.
 - **There is no exemption from assessment.**

Exemption application forms and details of fees are available on request from the home nation Training Boards.

10 Single Pitch Climbs

- 10.1 For the purposes of this scheme a single pitch rock climb is one which:
- is climbed without intermediate stances.
 - is described as a single pitch in the guidebook.
 - allows climbers to be lowered to the ground at all times.
 - is non-tidal.
 - is non-serious and has little objective danger.
 - presents no difficulties on approach or retreat, such as route finding, scrambling or navigating.

11 Equal Opportunities

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

12 First Aid

- 12.1 For the Single Pitch Award holder, first aid is an essential skill and the SPA assessment requires a current first aid qualification. The minimum requirement is that such a course must involve at least two full days or sixteen hours of instruction and include an element of assessment. It is the responsibility of award holders and/or their employers to evaluate their likely work and the type of situations that they can reasonably expect to encounter and to maintain current appropriate first aid training

and qualifications.

13 Complaints and Appeals Procedure

- 13.1 The SPA scheme is subject to continuous monitoring, culminating in a formal review once every four years. Candidates with feedback on their courses are encouraged to submit written comments to the Provider or to their Board.
- 13.2 If for any reason candidates find it necessary to complain about an aspect of their training or assessment then they should contact the Course Director or the relevant officer within Mountain Leader Training.
- 13.3 If candidates feel that aspects of their assessment were unfair they should:
- make contact with the Course Provider, explain their concerns and seek clarification.
 - if this does not resolve their concerns, contact the Secretary of the Provider's Board for advice.

Appeals must be lodged in writing within 60 days from the end of the assessment. The decision of the Board will be final.

14 Further Experience

- 14.1 Award holders should follow the National Guidelines issued by MLTUK (see www.mltuk.org). In particular they should note that the award remains valid only where the holder is deployed within the remit of the award and the holder has recent logged experience appropriate to that award. The responsibility for ensuring that leaders receive refresher training must lie with the provider of the service, or the individual in the case of self-employed leaders.
- 14.2 A recommended way of obtaining relevant further training and keeping up to date with developments within the SPA and other awards is to become a member of MLTA, the Mountain Leader Training Association.

MLTA aims to provide good communication between leaders and the Mountain Leader Training Boards allowing members to keep up to date with current developments in mountain training. These are achieved by providing web-based communication and practical training events at venues around the UK and Ireland.

MLTA membership is available to anyone who is registered for any of the awards overseen by Mountain Leader Training, i.e. SPA, WGL, ML(S) and ML(W), and who is also a member of one of the Mountaineering Councils.

MLTA membership can be obtained at the same time as joining any of the Mountaineering Councils of the UK and Ireland, when registering for any of the awards or online at www.mlta.co.uk.

Syllabus



Photo: Malcolm Creasey

1 TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas. They should be able to:

1.1 Equipment

- identify equipment suitable for personal and group use at a given venue.
- demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of equipment and ensure appropriate care and maintenance.
- demonstrate the ability to use climbing wall equipment appropriately.

1.2 Anchors

select suitable, sound anchors in a variety of situations including:

- spikes and blocks
- nuts and camming devices
- threads, chockstones and trees
- fixed equipment

1.3 Belaying

- connect self and others to the rope.
- set up sound belay systems to single and multiple anchors.
- attach self to the belay system.
- demonstrate the use of direct and indirect belays.
- use a variety of different belay techniques/devices competently and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.
- set up top and bottom rope systems and choose the most appropriate system for a given situation.
- arrange appropriate runners and belays to protect a seconding climber.

h. hold falls and carry out lowers.

1.4 Abseiling

- a. abseil without the use of a safety rope.
- b. set up fixed and releasable abseils, using a safety rope for the abseiler where necessary.
- c. use a variety of different devices and methods competently and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.
- d. solve common abseiling problems such as tangled ropes, inadvertent locking and pendulums.
- e. choose an appropriate abseiling site with consideration for:
 - i. ease of take off
 - ii. loose rock
 - iii. impact on the environment and the climbing resource
- f. demonstrate methods of safeguarding a novice abseiling.

1.5 Personal Climbing Skills

- a. interpret guidebooks effectively.
- b. choose routes suited to personal ability.
- c. move with confidence on Severe grade rock climbs.
- d. place runners suitable for lead protection.
- e. demonstrate a basic understanding of the safety chain and fall factors.

1.6 Background Knowledge

demonstrate a basic understanding of:

- a. the history, traditions and ethics of UK rock climbing.
- b. the home nation Training Boards and MLTUK.
- c. the club system and the Mountaineering Councils.
- d. competition climbing.

2. THE CLIMBING ENVIRONMENT

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas. They should be able to:

2.1 Access

- a. understand and observe current access and conservation guidelines.
- b. interpret and use effectively the access information given in guidebooks and other sources of information.
- c. show an appreciation of and care for all aspects of the climbing environment.
- d. show an ability to obtain information on and willingness to comply with locally important crag issues and agreements.

2.2 Conservation

- a. demonstrate good practice in the conservation and care of the environment.
- b. operate in such a way as to minimise impact on the environment (including the climbing resource).
- c. define problems of conservation and the effects of human pressure on the climbing environment.
- d. manage groups so that they have minimal impact and leave the crags in an improved condition where possible.

- e. demonstrate an awareness of the general environment on UK crags as well as locally important species and the legal situation relating to protected flora/fauna.
- f. demonstrate some knowledge of different rock types and crag features.

2.3 Etiquette

- a. demonstrate an awareness of responsibilities to the general public, environmental agencies, local residents, landowners and the climbing community.
- b. demonstrate an awareness of local rock climbing ethics related to single pitch crags.
- c. operate a flexible programme of activities so as to accommodate other site users.
- d. be aware of the hazards presented to other site users by the actions of a group and act to minimise these.
- e. demonstrate an awareness of the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to different crags, climbing walls and artificial structures.

3 SUPERVISION

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas. They should be able to:

3.1 Organisation

- a. plan a day's programme of activities to take place at a crag and an artificial climbing structure.
- b. assess the abilities and objectives of the group participating in this plan.
- c. check underlying aims and the objectives of the event.
- d. demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to any authorising organisation, parents, individual group members, the group as a whole and other site users.
- e. demonstrate an understanding of the impact of weather on climbing.
- f. have built-in flexibility when planning activities in order to respond to changing circumstances.
- g. know how to call for expert help in the case of an accident or injury.

3.2 Group Management

- a. choose appropriate venues and routes for group use considering:
 - i. suitability of approach/descent
 - ii. terrain at the base of the crag
 - iii. objective dangers such as loose rock
- b. demonstrate the safe and responsible management of all group members irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved in the climbing activity.
- c. brief individuals and the group appropriately.
- d. manage the individuals and the group effectively by:
 - i. good communication skills
 - ii. setting and reviewing targets
 - iii. identifying and reacting to the needs of the group in relation to involvement, interest, enjoyment and achievement.
- e. supervise a group of novice climbers belaying.
- f. manage time appropriately in relation to the plan, activity and conditions.

3.3 Supervising the Session

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas. They should be able to:

- a. issue appropriate rock climbing equipment and check correct fitting and use.
- b. deliver technical instruction to individuals and the group including:
 - i. choice and fitting of suitable harnesses
 - ii. attaching the rope to the harness
 - iii. advice, demonstration and coaching on climbing movement
 - iv. demonstration of effective use of chosen belay device
 - v. safe use of friction device for abseiling
- c. demonstrate an understanding of how to avoid common problems such as a stuck climber/abseiler.
- d. solve common problems including:
 - i. stuck climber whilst on a top or bottom rope
 - ii. stuck abseiler whilst abseiling with a safety rope
- e. demonstrate the use of bouldering activities with groups.
- f. demonstrate an understanding of warming up and injury avoidance techniques.
- g. understand the needs of those with physical and mental disabilities and medical conditions.

3.4 Personal Safety

Throughout any training or assessment course there will inevitably be times when all or some of the party will be operating from or near the top of the crag. Trainers must ensure that all the candidates are comfortable with the situation they are placed in and should offer guidance and training in how candidates may protect themselves appropriately. This should be ongoing throughout the course and should take into consideration that the weather, prevailing conditions and locations will vary.

3.5 Children and Vulnerable Persons

All Providers, Course Directors and staff involved in the delivery of SPA courses must be aware of and comply with current legislation regarding children and vulnerable persons.

Guidance notes for candidates, trainers and assessors



Photo: Malcolm Creasey

SPA courses take place on a variety of outdoor crags with all of their associated hazards. These courses are therefore for participants with a degree of independent experience. Whilst staff will endeavour to maintain a safe working environment, participants also have a duty to exercise judgement and care regarding personal safety and that of other members of the group.

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the syllabus and are designed to assist in training and assessing by emphasising approaches to and interpretation of aspects of the syllabus.

The success of any course, whether training or assessment, depends upon the contributions made by all involved. It is essential that candidates have the required levels of personal experience and that training and assessing staff are active climbers who are up to date with current practice. There are often many safe and effective approaches to any particular task in a specific crag context and the breadth of experience brought to the course by each person will contribute to the range of learning opportunities.



Candidates

Candidates should have experience of a range of climbing areas and styles so that they can grasp all aspects of training and understand assessment tasks clearly. 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 on a training course so that they can build on their skills afterwards. Candidates should also feel free to ask questions on assessment courses, as a clear understanding of tasks and contexts is vital to a satisfactory outcome.



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 any group of candidates and with regard to any individual needs. Courses 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 work with candidates individually to evaluate current levels of experience and knowledge and develop an action plan. Candidates should complete the course with a clear idea of what development will be required of them prior to assessment.



Assessors

Assessors will use the logbook initially to evaluate the experience of a candidate. Experience cannot be measured simply in terms of the length of time a candidate has been climbing. With a minimum of 12 months climbing experience pre-training, it would be expected (ideally) that most candidates would have completed in excess of 60-logged climbs on a variety of rock types prior to assessment. Over 40 of these routes would have been led, with many of Severe grade or above.

In addition to this independent personal climbing experience, a potential award holder should gain experience assisting with the supervision of novices climbing. This should comprise approximately 20 sessions and ideally include experience with young people as well as adults. This supervising experience should be gained at crags and walls. Without experience of supervising a variety of groups, indoors and out, candidates may lack the experience to deal with a variety of situations.

Assessors should evaluate the performance of the 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 the relevant 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. An assessor has to make a realistic and objective assessment of the capabilities of the individual candidate against the nationally recognised standard.

1. Technical Competence

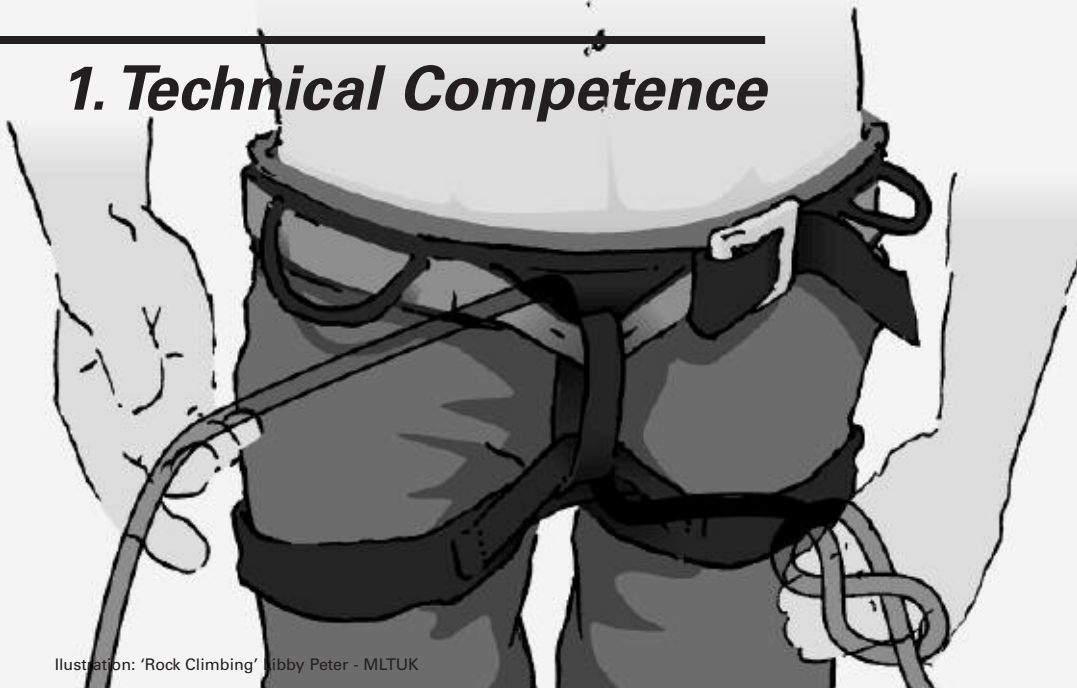


Illustration: 'Rock Climbing' by Peter - MLTUK

The SPA syllabus does not define a 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 trainees as well as that of trainers. Assessments allow for a possible range of responses to any given situation.



Candidates

1.1 Equipment, Anchors and Belaying

The SPA syllabus is based on the assumption that candidates are already rock climbers with experience of leading climbs at crags. It will be expected that candidates will have some experience of selecting anchors, belaying, climbing and abseiling. So the emphasis on a training course will be to provide opportunities to share ideas and refine techniques. Potential supervisors should be aware of the range of equipment suitable for use by novices as well as that for personal climbing use. It would be expected that a SPA Award 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, a candidate should be aware of sources of information, which include current publications and materials produced by the Mountaineering Councils.

There is an expectation that candidates will be familiar and competent with basic skills such as harness fitting, tying on and belaying and should also be capable of independently setting up a basic but sound anchor system suitable for a leader arriving at the top of a route.

The wider the range of personal experience the more the candidate will be able to understand the contents of the course and able to contribute to discussion. Whilst the training course will cover as much variety as possible the candidate should seek out

personal experience of different rock types, environments and anchor equipment and systems both prior to and post training.

1.2 Abseiling

As a personal skill candidates should be familiar with the technique and practice of abseiling with or without a safety rope as a means of descent or equipment retrieval.

1.3 Personal Skills and Background Knowledge

A sound knowledge and experience of climbing is fundamental to the SPA scheme. An award holder is not simply a safe operator of ropes and judge of anchors but, equally importantly, a climber with an understanding of and interest in sustainable use of the climbing environment. The SPA assumes at least 12 months' climbing experience prior to registration. It is therefore not a basic-skills course but more a refinement of the techniques of personal climbing and an extension into the skills associated with supervising novice climbers. Candidates must have led at least 15 climbs with leader-placed protection prior to attending a training course. Both training and assessment courses include visits to climbing walls, and candidates would find it beneficial to have climbed at a wall prior to attending a training course. The SPA is a UK-wide award and it is important that candidates should feel confident about climbing on unfamiliar single pitch crags and climbing walls by the time they approach assessment.

Guidebooks are an important source of information for the rock climber. In addition to route identification details, history and background and important access and environmental notes are contained within most guides. If this is out of date, other sources of information should be used. Guidebooks are produced by a variety of organisations in different areas of the country and candidates are expected to be familiar with more than just those books that cover their own locality. Misinterpretation of a guidebook leading to incorrect route choice can result in difficulties. So the importance of this seemingly simple element of the syllabus cannot be overstated.

The home nation Mountaineering Councils are not governing bodies that impose rules but, rather, representative bodies that defend the rights of climbers. At the point of registration on the SPA scheme candidates must be current members of a home nation Mountaineering Council or a club affiliated to a Mountaineering Council. This ensures contact with the organisations that helped devise the award and conduct work on behalf of the climbing community.

Candidates are expected to be aware of current issues in climbing through an active personal involvement in climbing, access to Mountaineering Council information and by reading the climbing press or appropriate websites.



Trainers

An integrated approach to the syllabus should be adopted, as far as possible, with issues such as problem avoidance and environmental impact considered throughout the course, rather than as isolated modules. Candidates will come with differing amounts of skills and experience; 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. The course should be pitched at an appropriate level for each candidate where possible.

1.1 Equipment, Anchors and Belaying

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 the training course will use gear provided by candidates themselves, as well as that of the trainer, to illustrate the appropriate use of different equipment.

Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of anchor types during training. Emphasis should be placed on the ability to select sound anchors and different ways of using these anchors. As the selection and appropriate use of anchors are both fundamental requirements and often a weakness, this element of the syllabus needs to be covered practically.

It may be useful to consider anchors in the following three categories: (1) natural anchors such as spikes, blocks, threads, chockstones and trees, (2) hand-placed anchors such as nuts and camming devices and (3) fixed equipment such as stakes, bolts and pitons.

Trainers should ensure that candidates are aware of the characteristics of different rock types and how this affects the selection of sound anchors. This can be achieved, for example, by visiting more than one rock type during a training course, suggesting venues to be visited during a period of consolidation between training and assessment, and by discussing logbook entries.

Essential considerations should include the following equipment:

Harnesses

As well as ensuring that candidates are aware of best practices 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 is appropriate.

Tying on

The harness manufacturer's recommended method of tying on to the rope should be encouraged for personal climbing. The differences in attachment appropriate for different harnesses should be illustrated.

Constructing a belay

The ability to set up a sound system for oneself as well as others should be covered. The way in which candidates construct belays to single and multiple anchors should be reviewed. The trainer should demonstrate alternative systems and emphasise the benefits of adapting them to suit different circumstances. Construction of belay systems using only the rope as well as those using slings to link the anchors should be covered.

Considerations when setting up a belay include essential elements such as:

- selection of safe and independent anchors
- tying off the anchors independently
- ensuring that the anchors are taut and equally loaded
- ensuring that the belayer is stable and correctly positioned when tied into the anchors

Desirable elements include:

- use of the rope loop central tie-in rather than the harness webbing loop as a focal point for

attachment to the belay system

- systems that are easy to adjust
- simple, and therefore quick, 'foolproof' systems

It may be valuable to differentiate between anchor placement / attachment to anchors / rope control rather than use the generic terms belay / belaying.

Single and Multiple Anchors

In different situations it may be appropriate to construct a belay from either single or multiple anchors points. A supervisor should have the ability to do either as appropriate, and not always have to rely on the same system. Although candidates may always prefer to adopt their favoured system, trainers should make every effort to illustrate the fact that the climbing medium is not uniform and that different crags and circumstances may well require different techniques and approaches. Trainers should encourage debate regarding the advantages and disadvantages of a range of belay/anchor systems, including the environmental impact and safety issues involved.

Direct, Indirect and Semi-Indirect Belays

A direct belay is one in which the load on a rope is passed directly to the anchors without passing through the belayer. This system may often be used where belayers are light, where the belayer wishes to operate at a distance from the anchors/belay device, or where it is felt that the belayer should not be linked into the anchor system to afford extra mobility. An indirect belay is one in which the belayer's body is an integral part of the belay system (as in a waist or body belay); this system is rarely seen in a rock-climbing context! A more usual system is one in which the belayer's harness is connected into the belay system, which is the usual practice when a climber has led a route and belays at the top of a climb. It is advisable that the harness does not become an integral part of the system; this is avoided by attaching the belay device to the rope knot rather than the central tape loop of the harness. This may be referred to as either the semi-direct or semi-indirect method and suggests that the belayer can take some of the strain in the rope without the anchor system being loaded (as in giving a tight rope). The advantages of each should be evaluated during training and the appropriate uses of each technique identified.

Top and Bottom Ropes

To avoid confusion top and bottom rope should be explained to the candidates. Although the terminology of top and bottom rope is generally accepted and used by almost everyone, the words top and bottom in this case will actually refer to the position of the belayer. In fact both systems offer a top rope but if the belayer is positioned at the foot of the crag, with the rope going from them, up through a top anchor and back to the climber it will be referred to as a bottom rope. Where the belayer is at the top of the crag with the rope going directly down to the climber it is a top rope. There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to both systems so candidates will need to be familiar with and practised in both methods. A distinction should be made between the techniques of a climber with a competent partner, in which routes are led and then seconded, and those of a supervised session, when the ropes may be set up without the supervisor climbing the route first.

A range of systems, including the use of separate rigging ropes, should be demonstrated for setting up top and bottom ropes. As well as the technical aspects of constructing these systems, other considerations such as the time taken, potential impact on the environment and the effect on other climbers should be considered.

Belay techniques

A wide variety of belay devices is available. A training course should enable candidates to evaluate a range of techniques and devices so that they can choose the most appropriate for a given situation. Trainers should ensure that a variety of devices are available during a course and candidates should be encouraged to experiment with new devices under the guidance of a trainer. The positioning of the device on the belay system relative to the direction of pull, the anchors and the nearby rock should be considered. Factors affecting a belayer's ability to hold a fall include the type of belay device, the weight of the climber, the slickness of the rope, the gripping strength of the belayer and friction inherent in the runners and any other factors which create friction in the system.

Falls and lowers

This element of the syllabus should be practised only in the most controlled situations. Holding a fall when top roping and bottom roping should be included in a training course. In effect this should amount to no more than taking the weight of a climber, as good belay technique would result in a fall being arrested before the climber has gained momentum. This provides an opportunity to illustrate the importance of good belay construction and should be performed under careful supervision. In addition to arresting a fall and then performing a controlled lower to the ground, candidates may benefit from practically tying off the loaded belay device before commencing a lower. Trainers may judge that it is appropriate to teach tying-off techniques in a situation where climbers are not exposed to the risk of being dropped to the ground.

As a SPA holder has responsibility only for climbers seconding or top roping climbs, holding a falling leader is beyond the scope of the SPA scheme. However, as candidates are all climbers they should have the skills, ability and experience to do this safely even though it is not tested on the course. Candidates should also have an awareness and understanding of the problems and difficulties that can be associated with belaying a leader.

1.2 Abseiling

It must be stressed that abseiling has a specific role in rock climbing - namely as a means to an end rather than as an activity in its own right. When abseiling on crags great care should be taken to avoid conflict with rock climbing either by causing damage to the climbing resource or by interfering with other climbers. Although abseiling is a skill required by climbers, very careful consideration should be given to the venues at which group abseils are conducted and the context in which it is placed.

Setting up abseils

Crags included within the remit of the SPA scheme do not need to be approached by abseil. Abseiling is included in the syllabus as a personal skill for such purposes as gear retrieval or getting close to someone in difficulties. An ability to both control the descent and stop whilst abseiling is essential. Trainers are expected to demonstrate appropriate methods of self-protection to assist candidates in safeguarding themselves when abseiling.

Candidates should set up and use fixed and releasable abseils, with the rope attached to suitable anchors. A releasable system of attaching the abseil rope to anchors is useful in a supervisory situation and should be demonstrated and practised at training. The advantages of each method of attachment in different situations should be evaluated.

Friction devices

Different abseiling situations may require the use of different friction devices. Factors such as how slick the rope is, the steepness of the abseil, the confidence, the ability and the weight of the abseiler all affect the choice of device. It may be appropriate to demonstrate a range of techniques and methods of altering the degree of friction.

Abseiling problems

Most abseiling problems are foreseeable and so should not occur. Methods of solving simple problems should be covered at training, but the emphasis should be placed on the skills and judgements required to prevent problems from occurring in the first place. Solutions to problems such as tangled ropes, a jammed friction device, or a student moving to one side resulting in a potential pendulum should be considered.

1.3 Personal Skills and Background Knowledge

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 novices being introduced to climbing. The selection of a suitable route is a process of combining guidebook information with personal observation. Training courses should build in opportunities for candidates to choose routes from guidebooks and climb them.

Severe climbs

There is no requirement for candidates to climb at Severe prior to or during a training course. The ability to climb confidently at this grade is required prior to assessment and trainers should ensure that candidates are fully aware of the additional climbing experience they may need to gain between training and assessment.

Candidates at training should not feel under pressure to climb at any particular grade other than that at which they feel comfortable. It is more important for them to have gained broad experience of climbing than to have developed an ability to climb harder routes.

Leading climbs

During the training course the placement of runners to protect a leader should be covered and practiced. Depending on the prevailing circumstances this might not take place on graded rock climbs but on ungraded rock or at a wall where gear placements are possible. The placement of runners to protect the second as well as the lead climber should be considered on climbs that involve horizontal or diagonal traverses or roofs for example.

Safety chains and fall factors

The basic principle of keeping the number of links in a belay system to the minimum should be explained. The advantage of minimising unnecessary links in a system (such as single karabiners in place of quick-draws or use of the rope alone in place of slings and karabiners) should be discussed.

Fall factors, in theory, predict the impact force of a fall. In reality, this also depends on the frictional properties of karabiners and ropes as well as the distance fallen relative to the length of rope in use. A full knowledge of these complex calculations is not necessary, but the principles involved are important. At least a discussion of this topic should be included during a training course.

History and Ethics

Climbing is not defined by a set of rules but by an unwritten code of conduct that is the result of the actions of climbers themselves. Although the code of conduct is based on the history and traditions of climbing, it is also continually changing as techniques, equipment and aspirations evolve. A SPA holder contributes to this process of development by introducing novices to the sport. So every effort should be made to ensure that this is done in a sensitive and understanding manner that conforms to the current consensus of good practice.

Clubs and Mountaineering Councils

Climbing clubs provide effective means of participating in the sport. SPA holders are expected to be able to advise a newcomer on how to contact local clubs and to explain some of the associated benefits.

The representative role of the Mountaineering Councils should be discussed and the functions that they undertake on behalf of climbers and mountaineers highlighted. The varied information available from the Councils should also be emphasised.

Climbing walls

Training courses should visit a climbing wall. This may contribute to the training of candidates through discussion of relevant issues such as group-use regulations, the importance of warming-up and the benefits and limitations of walls as a medium for the introduction of novices. Due to the controlled nature of the indoor wall environment, many trainers find them useful as venues to train the basic skills of rope management and belaying in particular. Conversely, the controlled nature of the environment does not facilitate the demonstration of many of the important judgements that are essential for the sound supervision of climbing. However, the particular aspects of group management in a public area can be best seen, discussed and taught at a climbing wall.



Assessors

1.1 Equipment, Anchors and Belaying

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 for group use.

Anchors

Assessors should select varied venues that provide a wide range of choice of anchor. Candidates are expected to exercise sound judgement whatever the rock type encountered. The selection and use of sound anchors should be regarded as a fundamental skill.

Belaying

In the first place assessors will often choose to assess this most fundamental aspect of climbing technique by observing the candidate rock climbing with a peer in relatively controlled circumstances. As some belaying of lead climbers may well take place on an

assessment course, assessors should assure themselves of the ability of candidates to undertake this competently.

1.2 Abseiling

Assessors may assess abseiling as a personal skill during a course. This may, for example, be when a candidate has to retrieve gear that has not been removed from a climb. The abseil should be prepared and conducted in a safe, methodical manner. Due care should be given to the risk of rope abrasions over edges, and potential damage to the crag environment must also be anticipated and avoided.

1.3 Personal Skills and Background Knowledge

Route choice

Commonly the candidate will be given a free choice of routes on which to demonstrate competence. Route selection with the use of the guidebook or by a visual assessment of the rock can reveal much about the experience of the candidate. Assessors should be cautious, however, about expecting quick and accurate route selection at a venue familiar to themselves but not to the candidates. Candidates will usually have the opportunity to select and climb a route in consultation with their assessor. Exceptionally, an assessor may choose to select a specific route for a candidate to climb in order to assess certain aspects of the syllabus.

Severe grade climbs

Candidates should have the demonstrated ability to lead Severe grade climbs which they will have recorded in their logbooks. During an assessment it is usual to assess this competence on climbs with leader-placed protection, but this requirement may be modified in exceptional circumstances (such as extremes of weather) or where the candidate is particularly experienced.

Leading climbs

The ability of the award holder to lead climbs and place suitable runners is a fundamental requirement of the scheme. Leading a rock climb requires many of the skills of a competent supervisor: judging the difficulty of moves, placing sound runners, arranging solid belays and being correctly positioned to eliminate the likelihood of shock loading on a belay system. 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.

Safety chains and fall factors

An understanding of basic principles relating to safe and efficient links in a belay system is important. It is usual for this to be evaluated during the practical elements of a course and to be extended through questioning and/or some form of written or discussion paper.

Climbing walls

Assessment courses must visit a climbing wall. This may contribute to the evaluation of candidates through discussion of relevant issues such as group-use regulations, the importance of warming up and the benefits and limitations of walls as a medium for the introduction of novices. Due to the controlled nature of the indoor wall environment, many assessors find them useful as venues to assess the basic skills of rope management and belaying in particular. Conversely, the controlled nature of the environment does not facilitate the demonstration of many of the important judgements that are essential for the sound supervision of climbing. However, the particular aspects of group management in a public area can be best seen, discussed and taught at a climbing wall.

2. The Climbing Environment

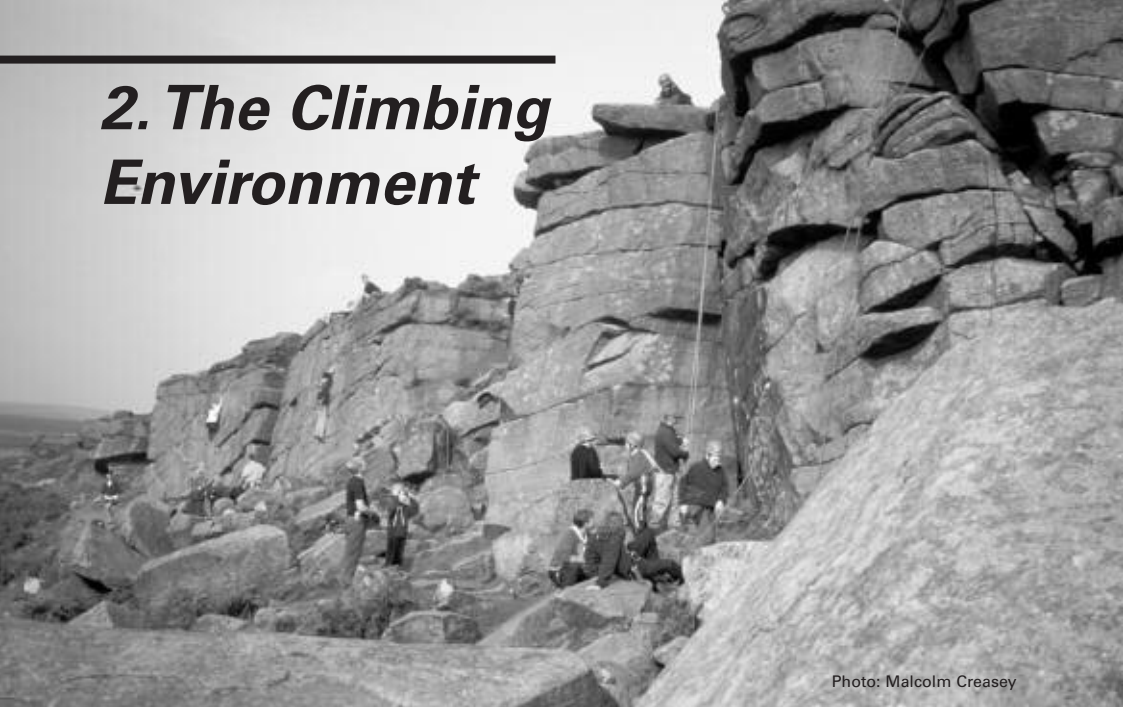


Photo: Malcolm Creasey

Access to climbing areas is a right that depends in some areas on the good will of landowners and in all locations on the appropriate conduct of climbers. As an individual climber it is important to have an understanding of the issues and problems affecting access to climbing areas. As a SPA holder introducing novices to the activity this responsibility is increased. It is also important for those working with groups to have a sympathetic understanding of the range of ethical considerations and the needs of other climbers using crags and walls.



Candidates

2.1 Access and Conservation

Most guidebooks contain important information relating to the specific area covered. It is important to know how to access up-to-date information from local climbers and clubs, retail outlets, relevant websites or the Mountaineering Councils. Candidates must be aware of the potentially greater impact of groups upon the environment than that of individual climbers. If climbing, as an activity, is to be sustainable into the future, then the impact of all climbers on the environment must be minimised. The crag itself as well as the ground in the immediate area at the bottom and top should be considered.

Many crags are of local, national and international importance in terms of their geological and ecological interests. Crags designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), for example, have statutory protection and are administered by the national conservation bodies. Many crags support important populations of nesting birds or important species of flora (flowering plants, mosses, lichens etc.).

2.2 Etiquette and Ethics

Candidates should be aware of their local rock climbing ethics, particularly those that relate to single pitch crags. The fact that ethics differ markedly from one climbing area to another should be noted. Accumulated experience of climbing in different locations should be seen as an important part of the background of a proficient SPA holder. It is possible to read about the ethics relevant to different locations in guidebooks and other material, but the benefit of direct experience should not be underestimated.



Trainers

2.1 Access and Conservation

The development of a sympathetic understanding of the issues is important if novices are to be encouraged by Award holders to participate in a sustainable manner. Trainers should illustrate a range of current national issues to demonstrate the importance of this element of the syllabus by careful use of venues and provision of case study material.

A benefit of visiting at least two distinctly different climbing venues during a training course is that real conservation issues may be observed. It should be borne in mind by trainers and candidates that the SPA is a UK-wide award and that candidates are expected to be familiar with current conservation issues relating to a wide range of climbing areas and rock types throughout the UK. It is to be expected that a training course will be a model of good practice.

Examples of ecologically or geologically important sites should be discussed during a training course and the importance of respect for these conservation issues instilled. If the local guidebook is not new, it is possible that the information within it is outdated. Alternative sources of information such as the Mountaineering Councils' crag databases, National Trust or National Park information centres may provide more accurate, up-to-date information.

In addition to guidebook information, some areas have local agreements that have been established to help maintain sustainable use of climbing venues. Candidates may well work in areas with which they are not familiar, and so every effort should be made to enable them to appreciate how to gain appropriate local information from available sources.

2.2 Etiquette and Ethics

Coverage of this area of the syllabus will benefit from discussion by candidates with a wide range of perspectives. There should be no conflict between a supervised group of novices and independent rock climbers. Conflict should not occur if local ethics are taken into consideration, routes are chosen carefully and areas of the crag are not occupied for long. Considerable climbing experience on the part of the candidate is important in gaining an understanding of the interests and practices of independent climbers. It is suggested that the following topics should be discussed and demonstrated during the course:

Awareness of group impact on other site users

Large groups of climbers can dominate specific routes and even whole areas of crag so every effort should be made to minimise this possibility. The following strategies may help: working in small groups, climbing routes from the ground up, moving from route to route rather than repeatedly top roping the same route, never abseiling on recognised climbs and asking nearby climbers if they wish to ascend routes occupied by top ropes. It is important to recognise that groups have no more right to use a crag than individual climbers and vice versa. The supervised climbing experience may be a formative one for group members, in which case the style of operation is very important for the future of climbing.

Manage sessions so as to minimise impact

A group of climbers under supervision has an impact on the environment around a crag, on the rock itself and on other crag users. Potential impact on others may take the form of interference with what they are doing, or plan to do or present a more direct increase in risk. Candidates should develop ways of avoiding exposing others to risk by careful group management and organisation of a session. Single pitch crags are generally relatively free from objective dangers such as stone fall. As a result climbers may not take precautions such as wearing helmets or basing themselves at a distance from the foot of the crag. Effective group supervision, careful choice of route and descent are all-important factors in minimising risks to others.

Leave the site in an improved condition

A positive contribution can be made to the crag environment and this should be encouraged to engender respect for the environment amongst newcomers to the sport. Many crags are in environmentally sensitive areas where access may be under threat, and the more that can be done to encourage respectful and positive behaviour the less likely that access will be lost. However, a positive respect for the environment should be seen as an essential element of any outdoor activity, not just the required behaviour to ensure access. Heavy use of any site will result in environmental degradation, but every effort should be made to minimise this through the encouragement of caring behaviour patterns and positive action where possible.

Simple steps such as the use of footpaths rather than walking on the surrounding ground (because it is easier to hold a conversation when walking two abreast) and the use of soft-soled shoes rather than clumsy boots, where appropriate, will help to minimise impacts. Positive action may include removal of other people's litter as well as one's own, careful repositioning of loose stones at the top of abseils rather than knocking them to the base of the site, retrieval of unsightly jammed gear and involvement in, or contribution to, local conservation schemes and crag clean-up days.

Awareness of impact on others at climbing walls

Climbing walls are often heavily used and climbers operate closer together than at outdoor sites. It will be valuable to discuss group management strategies that maximise involvement and minimise the extent to which the group spreads. Similar principles should be applied to the use of a wall as, a crag: unless specific arrangements have been made everyone has an equal right to use the facility and so no one group or individual should dominate an area or climb. In bouldering areas matting may be fixed or moveable. In the latter case great care should be taken to ensure that there is a common understanding about who is using the mat

and where it is positioned. Due to the proximity of routes at walls, great care should be taken when top roping to ensure an understanding with climbers on adjacent routes about who is doing what. Many walls are public leisure facilities that are governed by their own rules and regulations and these must be fully understood prior to use with groups.



Assessors

2.1 Access and Conservation

SPA candidates should demonstrate an awareness of the potential impact of climbers in general and groups in particular from the moment of selecting a venue through to the point at which the crag is left and the journey home begun.

It is likely that candidates who operate in a way that damages the environment or jeopardises access would fail the course even if the technical aspects of their performance were satisfactory.

Once an assessor is satisfied that the candidate has a basic empathy with and knowledge of the climbing environment it is common for this element of the syllabus to be further trained during an assessment course.

Competent candidates should familiarise themselves with local access issues for the location of the course even if they are undertaking an assessment in an unfamiliar area.

The actions of a candidate in relation to conservation whilst at a climbing site should be observed and, where appropriate, discussed. The impact of climbers will be clearly visible at most popular sites and strategies to minimise this should be debated.

Sustainable climbing depends on sensitive and sympathetic use of the crag environment. Evaluation of the attitudes and actions of candidates relating to the environment should carry equal weighting to practical performance, although this may be more difficult than that of assessment of practical skills. A variety of techniques exist for an assessor to evaluate the sensitivity with which a candidate regards the crag environment, such as discussion topics, written papers, scrutiny of the logbook, observation during all stages of the practical course and direct questioning as issues present themselves.

2.2 Etiquette and Ethics

Climbing ethics exist in the form of unwritten codes of conduct with distinct variations from area to area. An assessor would expect a candidate to be sensitive to and aware of both locally and nationally important issues currently being debated in the climbing press. The variety and breadth of experience recorded in the logbook may be a valuable indicator of the depth of knowledge of topical climbing issues. Assessors must ensure that candidates are sufficiently informed and able to operate in accordance with local ethics (often this may be evaluated through questioning rather than observation).

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 other climbers.

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 weather, the abilities and motivation of the individuals and characteristics of different venues all have an impact on the effectiveness of the session. Often it is the quality of the experience that may suffer if these factors are not recognised, but safety may also be compromised. The ability to change plans to suit differing circumstances is fundamental to any successful session.

3. Supervision



Photo: Malcolm Creasey



Candidates

3.1 Organisation

Whilst candidates may have little direct experience of organising climbing sessions they may well have the opportunity to assist with or observe such sessions. They should consider the implications of such factors as the nature of the group and its expectations and ability, the venue and its surroundings and the prevailing conditions upon the planning of a supervised climbing activity.

3.2 Management

An award holder is expected to be proficient in the management of group members while they are not actually climbing as well as for the safe execution of climbing techniques. The supervision of novices whilst climbing should be seen as only one element of supervision, as it is the management of groups whilst not climbing that is often more complex.

Communication is the basis of good organisation and effective group work. Communication is essential within a group at a single pitch venue and a climbing wall. As with all aspects of supervision, experience is the most effective way of developing these skills.

3.3 Supervision

Considerable experience of novice supervision should be gained between training and assessment in an assistant capacity alongside more experienced supervisors and instructors. As with personal climbing, this experience should be gained in a variety of contexts: walls and crags, different rock types and different size groups.



3.1 Organisation

Unlike most crags, climbing walls are managed facilities with specific codes of conduct that apply to their use. Prior to using a wall with novices it is advisable to be familiar with these as specific equipment may be required. It is normally good practice to check availability of the wall for group use and obtain information about any specified working practices. Moreover, adherence to certain ratios or completion of consent forms may be necessary. As with crags, different walls have different characteristics and may or may not be suitable for the objectives of a particular session. For example, some walls may have climbs mainly in the higher grades or have only limited in-situ top ropes, while others may have predominantly bouldering areas.

Given the high proportion of work undertaken by SPA holders on walls and artificial structures, all training courses should seek to visit and work on at least one. Ideally training courses should see both a large, busy wall to evaluate the problems associated with their use as well as a quieter venue, where more detailed training could take place.

3.2 Management

As well as being experienced in supervision techniques, candidates are expected to have knowledge of working ratios suitable for different situations. An example of this is the fact that managing a group of novices on adjacent climbs may be perfectly feasible outdoors but well nigh impossible indoors particularly on a crowded public wall on a Saturday afternoon. Climbing techniques including methods of attachment to the rope and the supervision of students whilst belaying are easy to practise in isolation; the experience of a trainer should be used to demonstrate as much as possible the other more subtle skills of supervision.

Approach to and descent from a route are aspects of climbing supervision that may be more difficult to control than the act of climbing itself, and so careful consideration should be given to these factors when selecting routes. By careful choice of easily managed as well as relatively complex crags, a trainer should illustrate the range of venues that are acceptable for use by a SPA holder. The definition of single pitch climbs within the scope of the award clearly excludes crags where access to either the top or base is difficult. Additionally at an acceptable venue, having gauged the qualities of a particular group, the award holder may judge that certain routes are inappropriate. The development of this judgement is greatly aided by accumulation of experience in a variety of situations, both when assisting with groups and when climbing independently. This element of the syllabus is clearly linked to the ability to establish clear and effective communications with a group.

3.3 Supervision

Personal Safety

Throughout any training course there will inevitably be times when all or some of the party will be operating from or near the top of the crag. Trainers must ensure that all the candidates are comfortable with the situation they are placed in, and offer guidance and training in how to protect themselves by various means. The techniques should be appropriate to award holders operating independently. This should be ongoing throughout the day and take into consideration that the weather, prevailing conditions and locations will vary.

Choice and use of equipment

Frequently candidates at training have limited experience of equipment suitable for group use. Items such as low-stretch ropes, edge protectors, different harnesses and a wide range of

other kit should be available for use during training to maximise the benefit derived from the course. It is particularly useful if trainers run larger courses for 6 to 8 students as this will usually result in a broader range of equipment being available. Different venues will encourage the use of specific items of equipment. Candidates are expected to be aware of equipment suitable for use in a wide range of circumstances.

The attachment of an abseil device and safety rope (where used) to the harness should be covered. At times it may be necessary to construct suitable additional support for the abseiler using a sling. This may be because the abseiler is a child or adult with an ill-defined waist, for whom an improvised chest harness would be advisable, or because the abseiler is particularly top-heavy, for whom chest support would also be advisable.

Supervision of group members belaying

Belay error is a potential cause of serious accidents. The selection of an appropriate belay device and the correct use of that device are fundamental to climbing, and the decision as to when a student is capable of undertaking this element of rope management is an important one. Candidates at training often have limited experience of using different belay devices and of supervising novices who are learning to belay. It may often be appropriate to create several opportunities during a training course to demonstrate a variety of methods of group organisation and supervision of novices belaying. Between training and assessment candidates should be strongly recommended to gain experience of supervising novices belaying, preferably in controlled situations.

Route choice and problem avoidance

The choice of route is a key element of problem avoidance when supervising climbing. A well-selected route should be appropriate to the skills, ability and aspirations of the group members, and therefore problems such as over anxiety or jammed limbs should not occur. Equally important is consideration of the safety of a route, taking into account such factors as the likelihood of swinging falls or the position of difficult moves in relation to ledges. If the hardest moves are directly off the ground or from a ledge then it may be difficult to prevent a falling climber from making contact with the ground/ledge.

Solving Problems

Crags that are appropriate for use by SPA holders have ready access to top and bottom and are non-remote. With this in mind, complex rescue techniques are beyond the needs of the scheme. This element of the syllabus should therefore be seen in context as a series of simple steps that can be implemented in the event of a climber getting stuck whilst climbing or abseiling on a crag on which it should always be possible to lower to the ground.

Emergency procedures should be introduced during a training course in a progressive way. The skills relate to many other aspects of the syllabus and should be incorporated into general sessions rather than dealt with in isolation. Most emergencies relating to novices getting stuck whilst climbing or abseiling can be anticipated. It should be illustrated repeatedly that careful planning and organisation should prevent these situations from ever occurring.

More emphasis should be placed on the good practices that avoid problems than on specific techniques required to solve them once they have occurred. Opportunities to discuss and demonstrate good practice in choice of venue, choice of route, setting appropriate expectations of the students, establishment of clear communications, positioning of ropes systems and positioning of the supervisor should be integrated throughout the training course.

In addition to an integrated approach to problem avoidance, a hierarchy of actions to solve simple problems, if they do arise, should be considered. A sequence is provided below, although any approach that stresses the importance of simplicity and avoids the tendency to look at a worst-case scenario first is appropriate. In normal circumstances it would be expected that a training course would include the following in discussion, theory and practice:

- Eye contact and verbal encouragement.
 - Tight rope to give reassurance.
 - In the case of abseiling, consider releasing the tension in the abseil rope whilst maintaining the tension in the safety rope.
 - Approach the stuck climber (from above or below) - to give encouragement from nearby. The climber then continues the supervised ascent/descent or is lowered to the ground.
 - Approach the stuck climber (from above or below) - to give physical assistance. The climber then continues the supervised ascent/descent or is lowered to the ground.
- The methods outlined above should solve any common stuck climber scenarios.

Bouldering

Bouldering is a form of climbing that, by definition, should not present the climber with serious risk of injury resulting from a fall. It is both a distinct element of climbing in its own right and also an effective and enjoyable means of training for roped climbing.

Whereas rock climbs have clearly defined objectives (getting to the top) bouldering is much more variable and dependent upon the imagination of the supervisor, provided they have first hand experience of the activity.

At walls, unless they can be booked exclusively, bouldering will take place amongst other wall users. Strategies to control the session as well as providing direction should therefore be evolved to avoid conflict and ensure that the sessions are constructive, well managed and enjoyable. Due to the typically steep nature of bouldering walls, an important additional consideration for the supervisor is that of injury avoidance. The development of warming-up methods and a progressive approach to climbing on bouldering walls, whereby easy problems with large holds are climbed first, is advised. Bouldering, by its very nature, can become a very competitive activity, but this can be countered to some extent if supervisors encourage supportive interaction, where small groups help and spot each other whilst bouldering.

Candidates are expected to gain bouldering experience both as an individual and in a supervisory capacity prior to an assessment. Contrary to the apparently low risk associated with bouldering, it is the one activity where students under supervision can, and frequently do, fall unprotected to the ground. At walls it is usual to have some form of matting, but this is very variable and as a consequence the activity must be modified to suit the nature of the facility. Given the often crowded situations at indoor venues and the competitive nature of some groups, it cannot be emphasised enough that bouldering on these venues may require constant vigilance to ensure the safety of the group and other users.

Bouldering at crags differs from that at walls in several respects:

- Good bouldering may be associated with hazardous landings.
- Bouldering may conflict with established routes.
- Descents are usually more complex.

- Venues are often more difficult to define and manage.

An appropriate bouldering site can provide the venue for an excellent activity either in its own right or as a supplement to a roped climbing session.

Training and Injury Avoidance

Climbing provides intense physical demands that can result in injuries such as strained finger tendons or, in the case of bouldering, lower limb injuries from poor landings. On climbing walls in particular there can be a tendency to undertake high intensity activity too soon. Candidates should be aware of these dangers and take steps to minimise their likelihood by instilling good practice in novices under their supervision. Issues such as warming up prior to climbing and the risks of training injuries should be discussed. Training techniques are continually evolving in climbing and candidates should be aware of how to go about gaining suitable information to ensure safe and effective training.



Assessors

3.1 Organisation

Candidates must possess a current first aid certificate for their SPA to be valid. A Pass may not be issued to a candidate who does not have a current and suitable First Aid qualification at the time of the assessment. In the event of an accident or illness they need to have a good understanding of the procedures for calling for outside help.

The assessment of supervision may take place with groups of genuine novices or through simulation with peers and through discussion. An assessor should consider the supervising experiences recorded in the logbook and use this to contribute to an overall evaluation of the candidate. The benefits of using real novices 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 carefully managed, otherwise the flexibility of a session may be lost and an assessment may be compromised by the needs of the novices. 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 climber first and foremost rather than simply a supervisor with limited ability and understanding of the activity.

The management of novices at a crag or wall can be difficult to assess without a group of genuine novices for the candidate to work with. When real novices are not used an assessor may choose to use role-play and may have to use discussion and questioning techniques to ensure that a candidate has developed sound judgement in this area.

Belaying and Top-Roping

A common cause of failure is an inability to create efficient belay systems suitable for group use in a variety of situations. This often reflects a lack of climbing experience at a variety of contrasting venues and different rock types. As far as possible, an assessor should provide

appropriate opportunities for the candidate to demonstrate a range of skills by selecting situations where different solutions are required. A situation in which one particular solution is the obvious one but the assessor directs the candidate to perform a different technique is less satisfactory than presenting the candidate with a situation which demands the use of a different technique.

An important point an assessor must remember is that it is not just a range of technical skills that make a supervisor safe, but, the judgement as to when to apply the different techniques that really matters. Assessors should build in opportunities throughout the course where different solutions are demanded, for instance, single anchors/multiple anchors, direct belays/indirect belays, top-roping/bottom-roping, use of slings to equalise anchors or a rigging rope. The objective in creating choices, rather than being directive about the performance of specific skills, is that it provides the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate judgement as well as perform skills.

The assessor should examine the candidate's understanding of the of the ways in which sessions may be organised and made suitable for differing groups and contexts. There should also be an evident understanding of the background considerations such as parental consents, organisational clearances, insurance and child protection issues that may affect the planning of an activity.

3.2 Management

The importance of route selection should not be overlooked during an assessment, where the focus can often be on techniques in isolation rather than a holistic approach. Candidates should be given the opportunity to select routes and perhaps venues used during a course. Providing real choices in the selection of routes, rather than directing candidates to specific climbs, will assist in the assessment of the awareness of problem avoidance.

One of the most difficult decisions a supervisor must make is when and how to allow novices to belay each other. In order to assess this, venues and tasks need to be selected with care.

3.3 Supervision

Problem avoidance is a theme that is best dealt with as issues arise throughout the course rather than as a session in isolation. Route choice follows choice of crag and choice of approach in the sequence of decisions that contribute to a well-structured climbing experience. As far as possible, candidates should be given the opportunity to contribute to these decisions during an assessment.

The supervision of abseiling provides good opportunities to assess aspects of environmental awareness, climbing ethos and group management. These issues are best evaluated if the candidate is given a relatively free choice as to the site for an abseil. Assessors should avoid directing a candidate to use one specific site, as this will result in an assessment only of the technical and supervisory skills without providing the opportunity for the candidates to demonstrate and justify the reasoning behind their decisions.

Aspects of bouldering should be assessed during a course. As a supervised activity at either a crag or wall, bouldering is potentially one of the more difficult sessions to control, and assessors should strive for realism when setting tasks. Logbook evidence of experience

combined with discussion will contribute to the evaluation of an individual's abilities in this area. Recognition of hazards, techniques for controlling the activity and the group, and imaginative delivery are all key factors to assess.

Most assessors will choose to integrate emergency procedures throughout the course rather than dealing with them as a set of skills in isolation. Simply lowering the novice to the ground may solve most problems, as the single pitch crags within the scope of this award have easy access to top and bottom. As a form of further training during an assessment course it may be useful to take advantage of situations as they arise and explore problems that could occur. The experience of the candidates and assessors should be pooled to establish what problems they know have ever occurred on single pitch crags. By providing real choice and getting candidates to justify their decisions, an assessor should be able to evaluate whether a candidate has the experience to foresee (and therefore avoid) likely problems. Where a candidate does not 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 and approach to foresee and avoid problems, it may be that they are not set a specific problem to solve.

Straightforward solutions to simple problems should be the order of the day, although assessors should realise that the ultimate worst-case scenario may be one where a SPA holder has to call for external help, but the probability of this situation arising is very low. Only in the very rare situation of the supervisor needing to remove someone from immediate danger of harm can we truly talk about 'emergencies'.

The use of hoist systems, the ability to prussik up a rope and the use of counter-balance abseil rescues would, in practice, normally be beyond the needs of a Single Pitch Award holder. Candidates may choose to perform these skills to solve problems, but assessors should not prescribe an arbitrary situation that makes them necessary. It is recognised that an assessor may, at times, wish to set specific problem situations, and every effort should be made to ensure that these are as realistic as possible.

Appendices

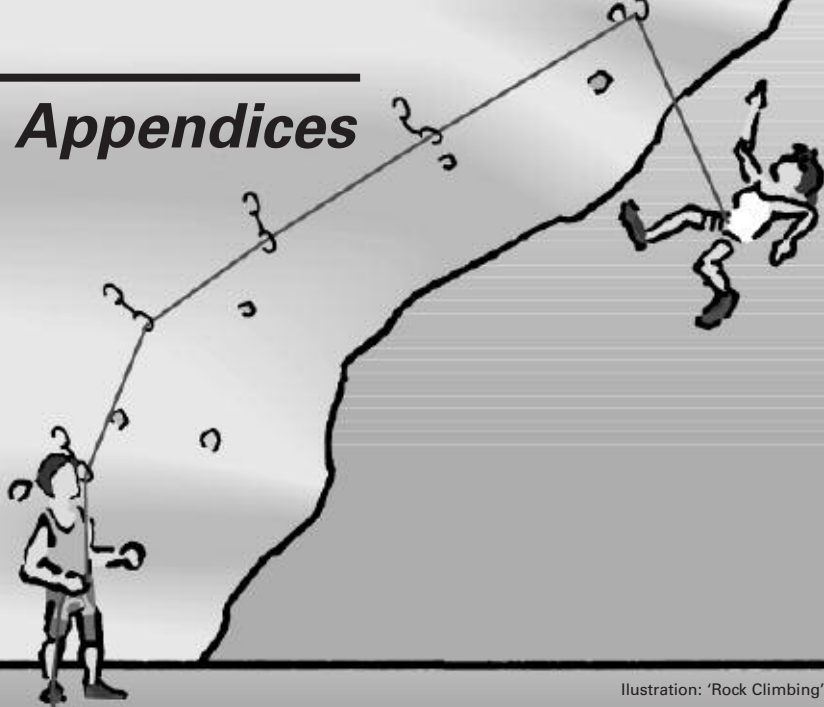


Illustration: 'Rock Climbing' Libby Peter - MLTUK

Appendix 1	Model Crag Environment Paper
Appendix 2	Sample Programmes
Appendix 3	Mountain Training Boards and Mountaineering Councils
Appendix 4	Bibliography
Appendix 5	MLTUK Requirements for Course Providers
Appendix 6	Awards Flow Chart

Appendix 1

Model Crag Environment Paper

The questions set out below have been prepared by a group of SPA trainers and assessors with the assistance of individuals within the national parks, National Trust, national conservation bodies and the Mountaineering Councils. They feel that climbing group leaders should be able to score fifty per cent if they sat this particular paper. Brief, one or two line answers are all that is required and for definitive answers contact any SPA course Provider.

The assessors of this scheme have a number of ways of enabling candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and may well choose other techniques such as setting research papers before the actual course or by asking direct questions while out on the crags. Whatever method is chosen this model paper should help everyone understand the standards required for this element of the SPA award.

The questions have been grouped into three sections: Access, Conservation and Appreciation of the Environment. Some aspects are required knowledge while others may be specific interests. For example, it is more important that candidates know something about their right of access to crags when compared to knowing the Latin name for heather. The inter-relationship between these areas is also important and assessors should endeavour to examine the candidates' overall appreciation for the crag environment (a difficult thing to define in a written paper). The balance therefore will not necessarily be weighted towards a specific interest at the cost of broader issues.

The law on access is very different in England and Wales to Scotland and Northern Ireland, and while some country-specific questions are asked, for other questions candidates should be clear as to which country/ies their answer applies. The Single Pitch Award scheme is a national award and it is important that the level of knowledge reflects this. Assessment will not be specific to a region nor to one particular aspect of this part of the syllabus, although some of the questioning at the crag for example will be specific to a local region.

1. You are leading a group to a crag along a Public Right of Way and have been approached by the landowner and asked to leave; what do you do? (2)
2. Briefly describe the differences between Rights of Way in England and Wales compared to those in Scotland and Northern Ireland. (2)
3. Name three mountaineering organisations responsible for access negotiations in the UK. (3)
4. Who owns the land within any National Park in England, Scotland and Wales? (3)
5. List four significant owners of land containing popular crags. (4)
6. How does the Common Law principle 'Volenti Non Fit Injuria' influence our access to crags? (3)
7. List any six of the items listed in the Country Code. (3)
8. To what does the 'glorious twelfth' relate and when is it? (2)

9. Name four sources of information you might use when researching an unfamiliar crag. (4)
10. What is meant by De Facto access? (2)
11. Dogs are one of the most common causes of conflict between landowners and recreational users; why is this and what advice would you give to your group? (2)
12. Suggest three reasons why access to crags may be temporarily restricted. (3)
13. Name the government agencies responsible for conservation in Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and England. (4)
14. What is a S.S.S.I. and how might it affect our access as climbers? (2)
15. Describe exactly what is meant by the common climbing term 'bird ban'. (2)
16. What is ACT and what is its role? (2)
17. List three badly eroded crags and suggest how you could help control further erosion. (3)
18. What extra precautions would you take when climbing with a group on extremely soft rock? (3)
19. Suggest three effects repeated abseiling might have on a crag environment. (3)
20. Highlight four types of environmental impact, other than erosion & litter, a group could have at your local single pitch crag. (4)
21. Name the three most important geological methods of rock formation. (3)
22. List five different rock types, a crag composed of each rock type and a popular route from each crag. (5)
23. Briefly, how are limestone, quartzite and slate formed? (3)
24. What is the major method of ongoing rock face erosion in the UK? (2)
25. List four different rock types and identify past or present industrial uses for each one. (4)
26. List three common plants you might find at (i) a gritstone crag (ii) a limestone crag. Why are they different? (4)
27. Name three types of native tree found on the crags of Britain and Ireland. (3)
28. List three plants that live on rock faces in the UK. (3)
29. What living organism covers rock faces and in effect digests the rock? (2)
30. Suggest three types of animal life that might be found on a crag. (3)
31. Name a reptile, an insect and a microbe that could be a hazard to rock climbers. (3)
32. Suggest two birds whose nesting presence on a cliff might trigger a 'bird ban'. (2)
33. List four environmental topics/areas you would mention to your group during a day's single pitch climbing. (4)

Appendix 2

Sample Programmes

Training Course - minimum 20 hours contact time

Evening 1 (or pre-course)

- Course introduction, paperwork
- Review of personal climbing experience

Day 1

- Meet at Crag A
- Guidebooks and route choice
- Runner placements, belay construction and leading climbs
- Belaying and lowering
- Personal abseiling
- Practical session - Climbing walls

Evening 2

- Review of practical sessions
- Gear review
- Environmental case studies
- Responsibilities of a group leader

Day 2

- Meet at Crag B
- Impact analysis - choice of crag, mode of transport/parking, choice of approach and routes, style of ascent etc.
- Top roping, bottom roping, abseiling with novices
- Rigging and supervising the activity - anticipating problems and minimising impact
- Bouldering
- Course review - Logbooks and personal action plans

Assessment Course - minimum 20 hours contact time

Pre-course

Send in logbooks

Receive home paper and discussion topic (optional)

Evening 1

Course introduction, complete paperwork

Day 1

Crag A

Guidebooks and route choice

Runner placements, belay construction and leading climbs

Belaying and lowering

Personal abseiling

Practical session - Climbing walls

Evening 2

Home paper discussion and topics presented.

Day 2

Meet at Crag B

Impact analysis - choice of crag, mode of transport/parking, choice of approach and routes, style of ascent etc.

Top roping, bottom roping, abseiling with novices

Rigging and supervising the activity - anticipating problems and minimising impact

Supervised bouldering

Course review and results

Note: assessments may, at the discretion of the course Provider, involve groups of novices

Appendix 3

Mountain Training Boards and Mountaineering Councils

Mountain Leader Training UK

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

Tel: 01690 720272

Fax: 01690 720248

Email: info@mltuk.org

Website: www.mltuk.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 720 248

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 Council of Ireland

MCI, 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: mci@eircom.net

Website: www.mountaineering.ie

Mountaineering Council of Scotland

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

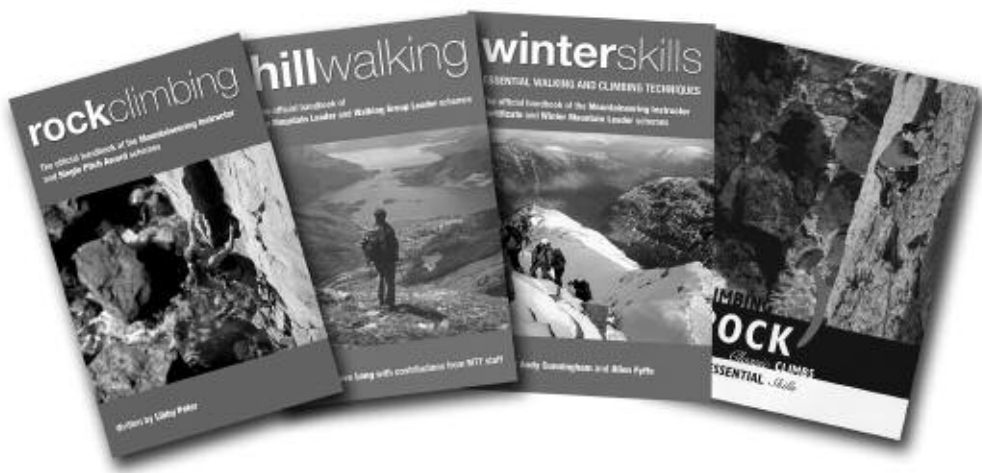
Tel: 01738 638227

Fax: 01738 442095

Email: info@mountaineering-scotland.org.uk

Website: www.mountaineering-scotland.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 & TechniquesLibby Peter, MLTUK, 2004

The Complete Rock Climber.M Creasey et al 1999, reprinted 2003

The Handbook of Climbing,A Fyffe & I Peter. Pelham Books, 1997

A Manual of Modern Rope TechniquesN Shepherd. Constable, 1998

Mountain Skills Training Handbook,P Hill & S Johnston David and Charles, 2000

Mountaineering Council magazinesSummit, Scottish Mountaineer, Irish Mountain

Log Climb, Climber magazines

The following publications are relevant to specific syllabus heading:

Technical Competence

Care and Maintenance BMC, 2001
Climbing Rock, Classic Climbs,
Essential Skills BMC, 1999
Performance Training BMC, 2000
One Move Too Many Petzl, T Hochholzer & V Schoeffl, 2005
Performance Rock Climbing D Goddard & V Neumann. Stockpole Books, 1993

The Climbing Environment

BMC Green Climbing Guides BMC, 2005/2006
History of the BMC BMC, 1997
Classic Rock K Wilson. Granada, 1981
Climbing Guidebooks, access and
environmental sections BMC, CC, FRCC, SMC
Climbing Wall Manual, Design,
Development and Management. BMC, 1998
Hillwalking S Long, MLTUK 2003
The Games Climbers Play K Wilson. Baton Wicks, 1978

Supervision

Child Protection Policy Mountaineering Councils
Group Supervision Booklet BMC, 2006
Leading & Managing Groups
in the Outdoors K. Ogilvie. IOL, reprinted 2005
Mountain and Cave Rescue
Medical Handbook for Walkers & Climbers .. MRC. Visual Communications, 1998
National Guidelines for Climbing P Steele. Constable, 1999
and Walking Leaders MLTUK, reprinted 2005
Protecting Children
- a guide for Sportspeople sports coach UK and NSPCC, reprinted 2003

Coaching

Sports coach UK and Coachwise Solutions produce a Coaching Essentials series available from Coachwise1st4sport (tel 0113-201 5555 or visit www.1st4sport.com). Publications include: How to Coach Sports Effectively, How to Coach Disabled People in Sport, How to Coach Children in Sport.

Appendix 5

Provider Guidance

In September 1997 MLTUK agreed a set of quality control requirements for all approved schemes within Mountain Leader Training. Individual Boards may then add to these minimum requirements.

1 Approval system

Approval to become a course Provider may only be granted by a Training Board and not an individual employee. Initial approval is for one probationary course, which will be moderated. Approval will then be granted for the remainder of the year subject to a favourable report.

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

All Providers must be holders of either a Mountaineering Instructor Award (summer) or Certificate or be British Mountain Guides. They must also have experience of at least three SPA courses, one of which must be an assessment, before gaining approval. All applicants have to satisfy their Board that they fulfil any additional requirements such as meeting the needs of specific catchments of candidates.

2 Workshops

All Boards run training events and workshops for their Providers. Attendance at an approved workshop or seminar, preferably scheme specific, 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. Assistant must hold SPA or a higher award.

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

4 Moderation

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

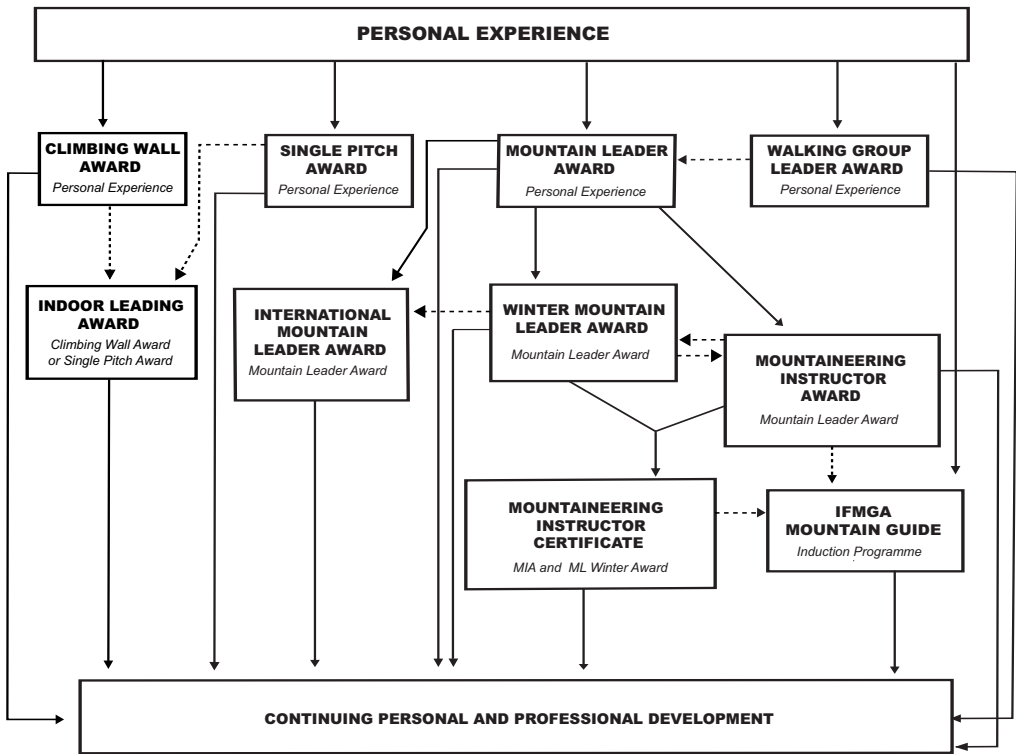
5 Board/Provider Links

MLTE, MLTNI, MLTS and MLTW are required to develop a variety of methods of ensuring effective communication between themselves and their Providers. Currently these include newsletters and personal contacts between Providers and Training Board staff as well as the workshops and moderation visits listed above.

Appendix 6

Awards of the United Kingdom

Personal experience requirements increase as candidates progress to higher awards,



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



Mountain Leader Training Association

The association for climbing and walking leaders.

MLTA aims to provide good communication between leaders and the Mountain Leader Training Boards allowing members to keep up to date with current developments in mountain training. It also aims to provide appropriate training opportunities in the form of workshops and seminars.

Membership

Full Membership is open to leaders who have passed the assessment course of one of the national awards of the UK's Mountain Training Boards.

The relevant awards are CWA, SPA, WGL, ML, ML(W), and higher awards.

Associate Membership is open to leaders who have registered for any of the above awards but have yet to pass an assessment course.

Note: All MLTA members must be a member of a Mountaineering Council.

The Benefits

- Talk to other members, share ideas or concerns and have your say via the lively Forum
- Browse the Library of topical articles and features
- Receive regular informative e-newsletters
- Access to a program of Further Training workshops and related National Events
- Contact leaders looking for work on the Notice Board
- Priority channel to get information from the Helpdesk
- Access to Insurance for members' activities
- Access to preferential rates on Clothing and Equipment

Additional Benefits

MLTA is run from the Mountain Leader Training offices at Siabod Cottage and members have direct access to the MLTA Technical Officer, who will deal with all your queries with support from other highly experienced staff members.

How to join?

Join when you renew your Mountaineering Council membership or go to www.mlta.co.uk and join on-line.

———— www.mlta.co.uk ————



Mountain Leader Training UK
Hyfforddi Arweinwyr Mynydd y Deyrnas Unedig

£5.00