



# **Rock Climbing Instructor Skills Checklist**

## **Introduction**

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

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

When reflecting you might find it useful to refer back to the Rock Climbing Instructor candidate handbook. In addition, the MTUK publication – "Rock Climbing" – details many of the techniques that might be used by a Single Pitch Award holder and will be useful for refreshing your memory of specific techniques or skills covered at training.

## **How to appraise yourself**

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

## **Learning stage descriptions**

### **Cognitive or understanding phase (Learning stage 1)**

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

### **Associative or verbal motor phase (Learning stage 2)**

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

### **Autonomous or motor phase (Learning stage 3)**

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

## Technical competence

The Rock Climbing Instructor will be able to identify and evaluate commonly used climbing equipment and demonstrate its use to individuals during a climbing session. They will be personally competent in a range of climbing techniques and be able to provide clear demonstration and effective tuition to novice climbers. They will be able to:

1. Equipment	Learning stage	Notes
1.1. Select and fit suitable climbing equipment for personal and group use.		
1.2. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of personal climbing equipment and ensure appropriate use, care and maintenance in line with manufacturers' guidance.		
1.3. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of climbing wall equipment and ensure appropriate use of		
1.3.1. in-situ ropes		
1.3.2. auto-belays		
1.3.3. fixed matting		
1.3.4. holds		
1.3.5. anchors/lower offs and fixed equipment		
2. Anchors	Learning stage	Notes
2.1. Select suitable, sound anchors in a variety of situations. Anchors to include:		
2.1.1. spikes and blocks		
2.1.2. nuts and camming devices		
2.1.3. threads, chockstones and trees		
2.1.4. fixed equipment including:		
2.1.4.1 a variety of different bolts		

2.1.4.2 stakes and other anchors placed in the ground		
2.1.4.3 climbing wall anchors		
2.2. Set up single and multiple anchors for a belay and attach themselves securely.		
<b>3. Belaying</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
3.1. Tie into the rope. Attach group members to the rope.		
3.2. Demonstrate the use of direct and semi-direct belay systems and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		
3.3. Set up top / bottom rope systems and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		
3.4. Hold falls and control lowers.		
3.5. Supervise others belaying.		
3.6. Attach self and others to the belay system and abseil ropes.		
<b>4. Personal skills</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
4.1. Choose and lead single pitch, Severe grade and Fr4, rock climbs in a safe, competent and assured manner.		
4.2. Demonstrate the skills of a competent second.		
4.3. Interpret guidebooks effectively.		
4.4 Demonstrate a basic understanding of the safety chain and fall factors.		
<b>5. Abseiling</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>

5.1. Abseil without requiring a back-up safety rope.		
5.2. Demonstrate methods of safeguarding a novice abseiling.		
5.3. Use common devices for abseiling competently and choose the most appropriate for a given situation.		
<b>6. Background knowledge</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
6.1. Demonstrate an awareness of the history, traditions and ethics of climbing in the UK and Ireland.		
6.2. Explain the role and philosophy of Mountain Training and its schemes, the mountaineering councils, climbing clubs and the National Indoor Climbing/Bouldering Award Schemes.		
6.3. Describe the grading systems used in the UK and Ireland		
<b>Management and decision making</b>		
Rock Climbing Instructors should be able to independently organise, plan, manage and deliver climbing and bouldering sessions to a wide range of participants, often with support from an assistant. They should be able to:		
<b>7. Planning and structuring a session</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
7.1. Plan individual sessions and programmes of activities with appropriate aims and objectives.		
7.2. Build in flexibility when planning activities; respond to changing circumstances.		
7.3. Demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to any authorising organisation, parents/guardians, individual group members, the group as a whole and other site users.		

7.4. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of weather on climbing.		
7.5. Be aware of Mountain Training's National Guidelines.		
<b>8. Organising sessions</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
8.1. In the case of an incident know how to call for relevant assistance.		
8.2. Choose appropriate venues, activities and routes for group use considering:		
8.2.1. suitability of approach/descent		
8.2.2. terrain at the base of the crag		
8.2.3. objective dangers.		
<b>9. Managing participants</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
9.1. Select appropriate management techniques to safeguard all participants, irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved with the climbing activity.		
9.2. Utilise effective communication skills to:		
9.2.1. Set and review targets		
9.2.2. Identify and react to the needs of the group in relation to involvement, interest, enjoyment and achievement.		
9.3. Demonstrate an understanding of warming up and injury avoidance techniques.		
9.4. Brief individuals and the group appropriately.		
9.5. Manage time appropriately in relation to the plan, activity and conditions.		
9.6. Avoid common roped climbing and abseiling problems.		

9.7. Resolve common problems if they occur.		
9.8. Communicate with the group and individuals to identify whether anyone has an injury or disability that may require reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to participate in the session.		
<b>10. Decision Making</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
10.1. Carry out dynamic risk assessments throughout each climbing session.		
10.2. Assess the abilities and objectives of the group participating in the session.		
<b>11. Personal Safety</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
11.1. Demonstrate appropriate methods of protecting themselves while operating at height during all activities.		
<b>12. Knowledge and demonstration of techniques</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
12.1. Deliver technical instruction to individuals and the group including:		
12.1.1. choice and fitting of suitable harnesses		
12.1.2. attaching the rope to the harness		
12.1.3. effective belaying		
12.1.4 abseiling.		
12.2. Teach and demonstrate fundamental climbing movement skills.		
12.3. Supervise a group of novice climbers in the following activities:		
12.3.1. belaying and tying-in		

12.3.2. climbing		
12.3.3. bouldering		
12.3.4. abseiling.		
<b>13. Managing/supervising other staff</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
13.1. Explain the role and scope of an assistant. Describe the opportunities and liabilities presented by using an assistant in a session.		
13.2. Manage an assistant.		
<b>Teaching and learning skills</b>		
Rock Climbing Instructors will frequently need to give tuition and support to a range of climbers in a variety of climbing related techniques. They should be able to:		
<b>14. Teaching and Learning Skills</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
14.1. Create and maintain a positive learning environment for all participants.		
14.2. Communicate effectively and appropriately with a group and individuals, checking for understanding.		
14.3. Demonstrate an ability to adapt the teaching style to meet group needs.		
14.4. Help participants develop a positive attitude towards climbing and introduce the idea of lifelong participation.		
14.5. Identify and use appropriate tasks to develop effective and safe climbers.		
14.6. Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for evaluating a session and success of the outcome.		
<b>The climbing environment</b>		

Rock Climbing Instructors should be informed and experienced in a variety of climbing environments, such as the indoor climbing wall environment, including both small and large scale (commercial) venues; outdoor climbing venues, including both 'trad' and 'sport' climbing venues. They should have a broad knowledge of the issues and challenges affecting access and use of a variety of climbing areas. They should be able to:

<b>15. Access</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
15.1. Source current access information and act accordingly.		
15.2. Show an awareness of important climbing wall rules and regulations, and demonstrate an ability to obtain and comply with this information.		
<b>16. Conservation</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
16.1. Have a basic working knowledge of the rock climbing environment including geology and natural history.		
16.2. Operate in such a way as to minimise impact on the environment.		
16.3. Pass on basic environmental knowledge in an appropriate and engaging way to educate and enthuse.		
16.4. Manage groups so that they have minimal impact and leave the crags in an improved condition where possible.		
<b>17. Etiquette and ethics</b>	<b>Learning stage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
17.1. Describe their responsibilities to the general public, other facility users, environmental agencies, local residents, landowners and the wider climbing community.		
17.2. Describe local rock climbing ethics related to single pitch crags.		
17.3. Operate a flexible programme of activities so as to accommodate other site or facility users.		



17.4. Describe the hazards presented to other site users by the actions of a group and act to minimise these.		
17.5. Describe the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to different crags, climbing walls and artificial structures.		

## Appendix:

### Assessment requirements

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

- You must have attended a Rock Climbing Instructor (or Single Pitch Award) training course or been granted exemption.
- You must be competently leading Severe grade climbs on outdoor crags with leader-placed protection.
- You must have led (and logged) a minimum of 40 graded rock climbs with traditional protection at a variety of venues (of which at least 20 MUST be at Severe grade or above). The majority of these routes must be in the UK and Ireland.
- You must be proficient in the use of climbing walls and have a minimum of 30 climbing wall leads graded at F4 or above.
- You must be proficient in outdoor bolt protected sport climbing and have a minimum of 10 sport climb leads graded at F4 or above.
- You must have assisted in the supervision of 20 instructed sessions post training. These sessions should be at a variety of different venues with 10 being on indoor climbing walls and the other 10 on outdoor crags. A session is a half day or evening.
- You must hold a valid first aid certificate.

The Rock Climbing Instructor assessment is 2 days long.

### Terrain definition for the Rock Climbing Instructor

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

## Rock Climbing Instructor ACTION PLAN

What is the timescale for doing your assessment?	
How many rock climbs have you led? At assessment you must have led a MINIMUM of 40 graded rock climbs with traditional protection at a variety of venues (of which at least 20 MUST be at Severe grade or above).	
How many climbing wall leads have you completed? At assessment you must have led a MINIMUM of 30 climbing wall leads graded at F4.	
Are you proficient with outdoor bolt protected sport climbing? At assessment you must have a minimum of 10 sport climb leads graded at F4 or above.	
List three syllabus areas that you feel/ think particularly confident or practised in.	
List three syllabus areas that you feel/ think require further practice.	

<p>As part of the consolidation period you must have assisted in the supervision of approximately 20 instructed sessions post training. These sessions should be at a variety of different venues with 10 being on indoor climbing walls and the other 10 on outdoor crags. A session is a half day or evening. At least five of these sessions must have personal reflective comments recorded on DLOG. How do you plan to gain this experience?</p>	
<p>What opportunities can you foresee for gaining experience to develop your Rock Climbing instructor skillset?</p>	
<p>Given your answers to the above briefly outline your way forward for becoming a Rock Climbing Instructor.</p>	