



Coaching Scheme

Interim Candidate Handbook

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1. Scheme Pathway

1.1 Introduction

This handbook provides advice for anyone involved in coaching climbers, and contains all the information you need to progress through the Mountain Training Coaching Scheme. As an interactive document it is packed full of links to further supporting information and, as such, is best viewed online. Throughout the text you will find advice, ideas and models to support the knowledge and experience of candidates. Mountain Training UK produces a range of publications for climbers and mountaineers that illustrate the range of evolving skills and techniques and these notes are designed to complement such literature.

1.2 Scope of the scheme

A qualified Foundation/Development Coach:

Has an understanding of the coaching process and can coach the skills of climbing at a recognised standard.

Terrain

The skills gained by becoming a qualified Coach can be applied in a variety of terrain environments depending on the coach's supervision qualification. These environments include:

- Indoor and outdoor bouldering venues
- Climbing walls and towers
- Single and multi-pitch rock climbing venues

NB

In addition to holding a coaching qualification, a Foundation/Development Coach must be appropriately experienced and qualified to supervise safe sessions in the environment in which they choose to coach. E.g. a site specific sign-off by a Technical Advisor for bouldering; a Climbing Wall Instructor for roped climbing; Climbing Wall Development Instructor for coaching lead climbing and Rock Climbing Instructor to coach on single pitch crags etc.

Exclusions

The scheme does not cover:

- The safety skills of climbing or mountaineering
- Group supervision

1.3 Stages in the scheme

The scheme consists of three progressive levels: Foundation, Development and Performance. Each level has a training, consolidation and assessment stage and it is possible to enter the scheme at various stages based on your accredited prior learning (see 1.3.10).



1.3.1 Registration prerequisites – Foundation and Development Coach:

There is a single registration for access to the Foundation and Development Coach schemes.

- You must have a genuine interest in climbing and the coaching of groups on climbing walls.
- You must have at least six months experience of climbing on a variety of climbing walls.
- You must be at least 16 years old at the date of registration.
- You must be a member of a mountaineering council (BMC, Mountaineering Ireland or Mountaineering Scotland). If you are a member of a club that is affiliated (do check) then that would suffice.

If you can meet all of the above requirements, here's what to do next:

1. Create an account on our Candidate Management System or log in if you already have one.
2. Register for the Foundation Coach scheme and pay the registration fee.

When you register for Foundation Coach you will also be given a registration for Development Coach, which enables you to progress to that level when you are ready.

1.3.2 Training prerequisites – Foundation Coach:

- You must be registered on the scheme.
- It is strongly recommended that you have attended a FUNDamentals of Climbing 1 workshop. Many candidates find attendance of FUNdas 2 is also beneficial at this stage.

1.3.3 Consolidation period – Foundation Coach:

- Practise coaching as many different types of individual and group as possible, ideally over a range of time frames and for a variety of objectives.
- The provider who delivered your training will be able to give you feedback and a personalised action plan for your consolidation period.
- There is currently no time limit on the validity of a training course and some candidates may take several years to complete the qualification.

1.3.4 Assessment prerequisites – Foundation Coach:

- You must be at least 16 years old.
- You must have attended a Foundation Coach training course.
- You must have attended a FUNDamentals of Climbing 1 workshop.
- You must have updated DLOG with your climbing coaching experience to include a minimum of 15 coaching sessions since attending training.*
- You must have added reflective comments in the 'description' tab for at least five of these coaching sessions.*



- You must have prepared lesson plans which can be reviewed by the assessor (before the practical assessment).*
- You must be appropriately experienced and qualified to supervise safe sessions in the environment in which you choose to coach. E.g. a site specific sign-off by a Technical Expert for bouldering; a Climbing Wall Instructor for roped climbing; Climbing Wall Development Instructor for coaching lead climbing and Rock Climbing Instructor to coach on single pitch crags.
- You must have completed a Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport module.*

* See also Appendix 3 - Additional information for Foundation Coaches.

Pathway options

It is possible to proceed from Foundation Coach training to Development Coach training without attending Foundation Coach assessment, provided you meet the Development Coach training prerequisites.

1.3.5 Training prerequisites – Development Coach

- You must be registered on the scheme.
- You must be at least 18 years old with at least 12 months personal climbing experience.
- You must have attended a Foundation Coach training course (or have your prior learning accredited by Mountain Training UK).
- You must be appropriately experienced and qualified to supervise safe sessions in the environment in which you choose to coach. E.g. a site specific sign-off by a Technical Expert for bouldering; a Climbing Wall Instructor for roped climbing; Climbing Wall Development Instructor for coaching lead climbing and Rock Climbing Instructor to coach on single pitch crags.
- You must have attended the FUNDamentals of Climbing 1 and 2 workshops. Many candidates find attendance on the Physical Training for Climbing and the FUNDamentals of Climbing 3 workshops help them get more from the course.

1.3.6 Consolidation period – Development Coach

- Variety really is the spice of life when it comes to developing coaching skills. Every opportunity should be taken to encourage exploration and ideally practise, the skills learned during training as soon after the training course as possible.
- The standard at assessment is high and coaches need plenty of targeted experience to consolidate their learning.
- The provider who delivered your training will be able to give you feedback and a personalised action plan for your consolidation period.
- There is currently no time limit on the validity of a training course and some candidates may take several years to complete the qualification.



1.3.7 Assessment prerequisites – Development Coach

- You must have attended a Development Coach training course (or have your prior learning accredited by Mountain Training).
- You must have updated DLOG with your climbing coaching experience to include a minimum of 40 coaching sessions since attending training.
- You must have added reflective observations for at least 10 of these coaching sessions in the 'description' tab.
- You must have prepared a number of progressive session plans for your long term students.
- You must have completed a home paper.

* See also Appendix 4 - Additional information for Development Coaches.

1.3.8 First aid

It is the responsibility of the coach and/or their employers to evaluate their likely role and the type of situations that they can reasonably expect to encounter and to maintain current appropriate first aid training and qualifications.

In the case of Foundation Coaches working with a site-specific accreditation, it is the responsibility of the climbing wall management and the technical expert to ensure that adequate first aid provision is readily available.

1.3.9 Safeguarding

Children and vulnerable adults deserve to enjoy their sport in a safe and inclusive environment. It is an essential requirement that coaches attend a recognised workshop for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in sport. As a consequence, coaches will have a raised awareness of the tell-tale signs of abuse, and develop the tools and confidence required to deal with any issues sensitively, appropriately and effectively should the need ever arise. A coach should be able to identify and recognise good coaching practice, understand values and feelings in relation to abuse and recognise their potential impact on a response. In particular, a coach should be able to recognise and respond to possible signs of abuse and take appropriate action if concerns about a child or vulnerable adult arise.

Nationally recognised courses are regionally available from Sports Coach UK amongst other providers.

1.3.10 Accredited prior learning

We want to make it easy for experienced and active coaches currently working at a high level to access the Coaching Scheme at the most appropriate point.



If you have extensive prior learning through an equivalent coaching scheme, and current experience of coaching climbing, you may be able to apply for Accredited Prior Learning (APL). Coaches from another sport who have completed equivalent coach education courses may be able to gain exemption from Foundation Coach training and go straight to either Foundation Coach assessment or Development Coach training.

All applications for APL will be approved by the Mountain Training UK screening committee, and whilst they will be collectively compared, each application will be considered on its individual merits.

There is no exemption from Development Coach assessment.

2. Course structure

2.1 Foundation Coach

2.1.1 Training

Training will involve a minimum of 8 hours contact time. Training courses may be delivered over a number of evenings/sessions to fit with climbing clubs and coaching academies.

Results: Completed, Not yet completed, Withdrawn, Did not show, Exemption.

2.1.2 Assessment

Assessments are usually bespoke and you should contact a provider about arranging your assessment. As a result there may not be many listed on the course finder.

Assessment will involve a minimum of two hours contact time.

Results: Pass, Defer, Withdrawn, Did not show.

Foundation Coach assessment courses consist of a thorough review of your logged coaching experience and an evaluation of a number of prepared lesson plans (see Appendix 4), followed by an assessment of a practical coaching session that focuses on one of the FUNDamental climbing techniques.

You must share your digital logbook (DLOG) with the assessor prior to booking onto a course. If it does not demonstrate appropriate coaching experience and/or lesson plans that meet the required standard, you will not be able to proceed to the practical assessment. For this reason, providers are not in a position to take last minute assessment bookings.

A typical practical assessment with approximate timings will include:

- Assessor-candidate briefing (15mins)
- Candidate meet with climbers to be coached (15mins)
- Candidate run warm-up, coaching session, cool-down and wrap-up/review (60mins)
- Assessor-candidate debrief and delivery of result (30mins)



The provider will arrange for a small group of climbers (min. 3, max. 6) to be coached during the practical assessment, or may ask you to arrange this. This may be a group that you are currently coaching, or one that has been brought together for the assessment. Either way, a coaching session based on a FUNDamental climbing technique* will be required, which is why novice climbers will be more appropriate than advanced climbers.

*See also Appendix 3, [Additional Information for Foundation Coaches](#).

2.2 Development Coach

2.2.1 Training

Training will involve a minimum of 16 hours contact time. Courses are usually run over two days, with evening sessions if required.

Results: Completed, Not yet completed, Withdrawn, Did not show, Exemption.

2.2.2 Assessment

Assessments are usually bespoke and you should contact a provider about arranging your assessment. As a result there may not be many listed on the course finder.

Assessment will involve a minimum of four hours contact time and will include two coaching sessions; one with your own long term climbers and one with unknown climbers.

Results: Pass, Defer, Withdrawn, Did not show.

Development Coach assessment courses consist of a thorough review of your logged coaching experience, an evaluation of session planning with structured progression over a number of sessions, and a written paper followed by a final practical assessment.

You must share your digital logbook (DLOG) with the assessor prior to booking onto a course, who will advise you on an appropriate timescale for attending a practical assessment. If it does not demonstrate appropriate coaching experience and/or session planning that meets the required standard, you will not be able to proceed to the practical assessment. For this reason, providers are not in a position to take last minute assessment bookings.

The unknown coaching group will normally consist of two experienced climbers who may be at different levels but make a typical improver coaching group. The content of the coaching session should be appropriate to both climbers, and could incorporate any appropriate aspect of climbing technique. See Appendix 4, [Additional Information for Development Coaches](#).

A typical practical assessment with approximate timings would include:

- Assessor-candidate briefing (30mins)
- Candidate runs coaching session with own climbers (60mins)



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- Session review (20mins)
 - Break (30mins)
 - Candidate meet with unknown climbers to be coached (30mins)
 - Candidate runs coaching session with unknown climbers (60mins)
 - Session review (20mins)
 - Assessor-candidate debrief and delivery of result (30mins)

The exact format and timings for the assessment will be outlined by the provider.

It is common for two candidates to be invited for assessment on the same day. This way you can coach your own clients and then swap clients to fulfil the two practical coaching sessions. Depending on how the provider manages the schedule, the assessment may take up a full day.

When assessing one candidate, a second pair of climbers will be made available by the provider for the coaching session with unknown climbers.

3 Course delivery

3.1 Training

Course directors are approved by Mountain Training UK.

Foundation Coach training

Min. course size: 4, max. course size: 12, max. ratio: 1:12.

Development Coach training

Min. course size: 4, max. course size: 10, max. ratio: 1:10.

3.2 Assessment

Course directors are approved by Mountain Training UK.

Foundation Coach assessment

Max. ratio: 1:1 during practical assessment.

Development Coach assessment

Max. ratio: 1:1 during practical assessment.

4 Awarding organisation

Mountain Training UK



Foundation Coach

Syllabus and guidance notes

The Foundation Coach qualification is designed to enable coaches to be more effective in the engaging and inspirational delivery of the foundation skills of climbing. Hence the syllabus focuses on three main areas: the coaching skills and knowledge of what and how to coach more effectively; the technical competence to manage and deliver an enjoyable and stimulating session, usually to a group of individuals; and the culture of reflective practice in striving for continual improvement.

1. Coaching foundations

A Foundation Coach needs the coaching skills to be able to deliver and develop robust foundations for a climber's future development. The emphasis is on the quality delivery of the essential behaviours of good coaching.

1.1 Coaching behaviours

- 1.1.1 Demonstrate a basic knowledge of learning styles.
- 1.1.2 Demonstrate an ability to adapt the coaching style to meet individual needs.

Guidance

As a Foundation Coach, you need to be able to deliver to a wide range of individuals within a group. Teaching models (and a rudimentary understanding of learning styles) help to make sure there is "something for everyone" in your delivery of concepts and techniques. Your sessions need to take place in a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment, where all participants are engaged and feel able to participate.

1.2 Planning

- 1.2.1 Check the underlying aims and objectives of the session.
- 1.2.2 Demonstrate preparation to deal with changing circumstances in a session, e.g. client ability, wall availability, etc.
- 1.2.3 Be aware of and comply with current legislation regarding children and vulnerable people.
- 1.2.4 Contribute effectively to session planning within a coaching team.

Guidance

Identifying learning outcomes or a clear purpose for the session, will help you to deliver progressive and structured sessions, with a clear direction. Concentrating on the delivery of a single session, as a Foundation Coach you will often be assisting a Development Coach who will set the learning outcomes as part of a longer term progression, course or scheme. It is important that you can contribute to this planning process (as part of your development towards becoming a Development Coach in the future) and so focus the delivery of the session on learning outcomes rather than just activity.



1.3 Preparing and concluding

- 1.3.1 Brief individuals and the group appropriately.
- 1.3.2 Issue appropriate rock climbing equipment and check correct fitting and use.
- 1.3.3 Store equipment appropriately after each session

Guidance

You should understand the impact on group motivation of a clear briefing and the group understanding the plan. The management of the whole session should then support this.

1.4 Managing

- 1.4.1 Demonstrate an ability to work under the direction of a supervising coach.
- 1.4.2 Show an awareness of group management strategies and techniques.
- 1.4.3 Demonstrate an understanding of how to avoid common problems.
- 1.4.4 Manage individual and group needs effectively.

Guidance

Many of these topics will be covered in Climbing Wall Instructor or in-house training on session management with groups. As a Foundation Coach you should be able to adapt these skills to a variety of walls and groups as required.

1.5 Sporting values

- 1.5.1 Help develop a positive attitude towards climbing and lifelong participation.

Guidance

Climbing is a great sport which people can enjoy from infancy to a ripe old age. Challenged by choice, and personal ability, it is possible for climbers to develop their skills and enjoy their climbing for many years.

1.6 Movement skills

- 1.6.1 Explain, demonstrate and evaluate the fundamental movement skills and principles of climbing.
- 1.6.2 Identify and apply appropriate games and tasks to develop the 'FUNdamentals' of climbing movement.

Guidance

It is important that you can demonstrate key skills and understand the roles that demonstration and instruction play in the learning process. It is also important that you understand that the participants need to practise and apply their learning.

Many inexperienced coaches struggle to select games that deliver the essential techniques and develop particular skills. Games should be linked to learning outcomes, rather than just for the sake of it. Furthermore, within the group there may be a wide range of abilities and



preferences for learning and delivery. It is therefore important to have a number of varied strategies to cope with the needs of such individuals.

1.7 Physiology

1.7.1 Demonstrate an understanding of warming up and injury avoidance techniques.

Guidance

As a Foundation Coach you need to have a variety of warm up drills and exercises to hand. Warm ups should be tailored to the group, the session aims, the situation and conditions. Whilst development is actively encouraged, whatever their level of ability or understanding, it should be moderated by the need for long term injury prevention and development of best practice.

Top tips

The basic and essential foundations of good coaching are surprisingly simple. Good coaches require:

- The questioning and observational skills to find a starting point and identify the skill level of the participants, having the ability to modify the delivery accordingly.
- The ability to clearly demonstrate the 'FUNDamental' skills of climbing.
- The understanding of when and how a succinct explanation is required to provide essential detail.
- Coupled with the understanding that all this may be wasted unless the climbers get the chance to practise and apply these skills for themselves.

The focus of the Foundation Coach qualification is on performing these basics well.

2. Reflective practice

The culture of reflective practice and striving for continual improvement is a fundamental feature in the development of high quality coaches and climbers alike.

2.1 Giving feedback

Show an understanding of the role of feedback for participants by:

- 2.1.1 Demonstrating an awareness of when to give feedback.
- 2.1.2 Providing appropriate feedback for participants and reports to the supervising coach.

2.2 Evaluating

2.2.1 Show an understanding of the reasons of evaluating a session.

2.2.2 Evaluate the success of a session by:

2.2.2.1 assessing the appropriateness of the session aims and objectives, and the activities used to achieve them;

2.2.2.2 contributing effectively to a session review with the coaching team, including self-evaluation.



Guidance

You should understand the need for, and appropriate timing of, succinct and meaningful feedback that helps your climbers develop and achieve their potential. You need to understand that different people and situations may require varied feedback methods and be able to adapt your approach accordingly.

A culture of reflective practice will enable you to review and modify your sessions and delivery. A simple 'Plan-Do-Review' cycle should be encouraged and implemented wherever possible.

The long term development of climbers is influenced by the feedback they receive, the time they spend practising new skills in varied situations and a healthy understanding of the learning journey. If you manage these factors well, motivated climbers can continue to develop beyond the end of the session.

3. Technical competence

Whilst your technical competence will already have been assessed as part of a site-specific accreditation or instructor qualification, the Foundation Coach qualification will assess how you make use of those skills in the facilitation of effective learning.

3.1 Equipment

- 3.1.1 Identify equipment suitable for personal and group use at any given climbing wall.
- 3.1.2 Demonstrate the ability to use climbing wall equipment appropriately.
- 3.1.3 Demonstrate a basic understanding of the use and limitations of different types of surface, hold, safety mats and anchors.
- 3.1.4 Show a basic understanding of the safety chain.

3.2 Belaying

- 3.2.1 Connect self and others to the rope for belaying.
- 3.2.2 Choose and fit suitable harnesses.
- 3.2.3 Use belay systems effectively.
- 3.2.4 Hold falls and control lowers.
- 3.2.5 Supervise others belaying.

3.3 The climbing wall environment

- 3.3.1 Show an awareness of both general and locally important rules and regulations, and demonstrate an ability to obtain and comply with this information.
- 3.3.2 Demonstrate an awareness of responsibilities to the general public, including other facility users and the wider climbing community.
- 3.3.3 Be aware of the hazards presented to other site users by the actions of a group, and act in such a way that these are minimised.



Guidance

Your technical competence supports the safe delivery of your coaching sessions and should not be neglected as you develop your coaching skills. By role modelling best practice in climbing walls or at the crag, you will enable and empower climbers to transfer their skills and behaviours to new and varied venues. This can only ever be good for their motivation and long term development in climbing.



Development Coach

Syllabus and guidance notes

The Development Coach qualification is designed for independent coaches who will prepare for and deliver a structured progression in 'climber centred coaching' over a series of sessions.

Often working with Foundation Coaches, a Development Coach is able to take a mentoring role and lead in the review process to promote reflective coaching practice.

This syllabus builds on the competencies of the Foundation Coach, such that candidates who gain direct entry should ensure they are familiar with the Foundation Coach syllabus and be proficient in these skills.

1. Coaching development

The coaching content of the Development Coach qualification takes the skills of the Foundation Coach to a more sophisticated level to enable delivery of a series of sessions, and match the delivery to the needs of developing climbers. This may range from working with just one climber to coaching a range of individuals within a group.

1.1 Coaching behaviours

- 1.1.1 Identify the different ways people learn new skills and concepts and demonstrate appropriate coaching.
- 1.1.2 Identify and understand the roles and responsibilities of a Foundation Coach and Development Coach.
- 1.1.3 Demonstrate flexibility in coaching by responding to changing circumstances.

Guidance

Coaching development in improvers is fundamentally different to coaching novices and this is to be understood and embraced. As a Development Coach you should understand the learning journey and the practical stages in skill acquisition. Furthermore, you should understand how you need to adapt and change your delivery to suit learners at different stages, sometimes within the same group or even session.

1.2 Planning

- 1.2.1 Assess the abilities and objectives of the individual and the participating group.
- 1.2.2 Plan a session and series of sessions that have suitable goals, progression and evaluation.
- 1.2.3 Be aware of and comply with current legislation regarding children and vulnerable people.



Guidance

Detailed and structured planning is only possible once a coach has established the starting point and the key priorities. The skills of questioning, observation and analysis are key to planning your coaching sessions. Using video as a data capture tool in this process can complement the analytical skills and technical understanding of coaches and climbers alike.

You are then responsible for the planning and goal setting for both groups and individuals over a series of sessions. This requires a more detailed understanding of the learning journey and the stages in a climber's progression, and a focused structure to plan development.

1.3 Preparing and concluding

- 1.3.1 Brief individuals and the group appropriately.
- 1.3.2 Issue appropriate rock climbing equipment and check correct fitting and use.
- 1.3.3 Store equipment appropriately after each session.

Guidance

Going beyond the simple delivery of 'one size fits all' when managing safety is all about adapting to learning styles and developmental stages. Techniques should be selected to suit learning objectives and desired outcomes for the session, as well as responding to the developing needs of the climbers.

1.4 Managing

- 1.4.1 Demonstrate an ability to work with other coaches and assistants.
- 1.4.2 Show an awareness of group management strategies and techniques.
- 1.4.3 Demonstrate an understanding of how to avoid common problems.
- 1.4.4 Be aware of how a climber's personal life may affect participation and performance.
- 1.4.5 Understand and be able to facilitate experiential learning.
- 1.4.6 Understand possible implications of sport/competition on self-confidence.

Guidance

Whilst you, as a Development Coach, may have overall responsibility for the structured progression of a series of sessions, you may at times hand over the delivery of a particular session or group to a Foundation Coach. Hence it is really important that you have set clear learning objectives and outcomes for each session, and are able to brief an assistant coach accordingly.

Development Coaches are responsible for the motivation, development and welfare of the climbers over a series of sessions and it is important that you have an understanding of diversity and inclusivity, in order to deliver coaching in a safe and supportive environment for all participants.



Within the delivery of climbing centred coaching sessions, it is important to recognise the needs for individual practice and learning and the effects this can have on motivation and performance.

1.5 Sporting values

- 1.5.1 Help develop a positive attitude towards climbing and lifelong participation.
- 1.5.2 Develop basic teamwork between individuals.
- 1.5.3 Develop communication between climber, coach and peers.
- 1.5.4 Develop a sporting approach to competition, e.g. fair play and humility.
- 1.5.5 Develop the climber's awareness of the climbing environment and the ethics of the sport.
- 1.5.6 Encourage participation in a variety of climbing activities as well as other sports.

Guidance

For some, climbing may be the vehicle they use to develop their core athletic competencies of agility, balance and coordination. As a result, you must understand the principles of supporting the sporting pathway and appreciate the importance of being a role model. Whilst it is easy to focus on youthful high performance, varied pathways exist and it is important to understand and promote the longer term benefits of a healthy sporting habit for life.

1.6 Movement skills

- 1.6.1 Explain, demonstrate and evaluate the fundamental climbing movement principles.
- 1.6.2 Identify and apply appropriate games and tasks to develop the 'FUNdamentals' of climbing movement.
- 1.6.3 Observe and analyse students' climbing movements and provide appropriate coaching.

Guidance

As climbers develop, the need for detailed analysis, greater technical understanding of climbing movement, and detailed feedback increases in line with their progress. Hence, the demands on the coach increase. You need to have a high level of technical understanding of the fundamental principles and techniques of climbing movement, even if you do not have a high level of personal climbing proficiency. The skills of observation and technical analysis are essential here, in order to understand the technical requirements of climbing moves and routes and to be able to record and deliver meaningful feedback to the climber.

Games, drills and practical tasks should be set and selected for their ability to develop these movement skills, and should be tailored to the needs of the individual climber where possible.

1.7 Physiology

- 1.7.1 Structure sessions to include appropriate warm-up.



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- 1.7.2 Gauge students' physical fitness and strength and set tasks appropriate to these.
 - 1.7.3 Understand fatigue and how this affects students' performance and their ability to learn.
 - 1.7.4 Identify physical factors which cause students to fail on certain routes.
 - 1.7.5 Have a basic understanding of the body's energy-producing systems.
 - 1.7.6 Have a basic understanding of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.
 - 1.7.7 Have a basic understanding of bone, muscle, tendon and ligament structures.
 - 1.7.8 Understand the dangers of overtraining for different age groups.

Guidance

The benefits of warming up as a healthy precursor to exercise should be well understood and respected. At Development Coach level it is expected that you can deliver a variety of warm up routines and provide guidance for climbers, to ensure that individuals find healthy habits that suit their needs and preferences.

As a Development Coach you will plan and deliver a series of sessions (typically over six to eight weeks), which allows climbers to make physical gains in their development. At a basic level this may involve the coaching of techniques to develop suppleness and agility, alongside basic strength and conditioning sessions, to improve physical performance and avoid injury.

Coaches who plan and deliver specific training programmes for developing climbers need to have an underlying knowledge of a climber's physiology. This knowledge should enable the optimal planning and delivery of progressive, periodised training programmes, whilst reducing the risk of injury. You should be able to educate climbers on the impact of diet and hydration on performance, and be able to provide guidance and support on these topics. Coaches working with young climbers should be especially aware of the impact of training on young bodies at crucial stages of development.

1.8 Psychology

- 1.8.1 Demonstrate knowledge of the stages of skill acquisition.
- 1.8.2 Identify and adopt the preferred/most effective learning style for each individual.
- 1.8.3 Motivate and help to maintain students' motivation.
- 1.8.4 Help students to reduce the negative effects of stress.
- 1.8.5 Help students to set appropriate long- and short-term goals.
- 1.8.6 Give appropriate and well-timed feedback.

Guidance

You need to understand the stages of development as a climber progresses from a novice to becoming independent and autonomous. In support of climber centred coaching, it is important that you and your climbers share this knowledge of the learning journey, and that you understand the impact this can have on long-term motivation. Along this journey,



there will be many occasions when a particular climber will develop particular needs or objectives and a good coach should be able to adapt their style and plans accordingly.

Climbing is a rewardingly psychological challenge, and coaching the skills of decision making and dealing with stress and anxiety are very different, yet just as important, as being able to coach the physical skills of climbing movement. You should understand how to help climbers deal with the psychological and motivational challenges that will arise, and be proficient in giving appropriate advice and feedback to support this development.

1.9 Tactical

- 1.9.1 Set tasks to develop students' route-reading skills.
- 1.9.2 Explain the difference between on-sighting and other tactics, including red-pointing, and help students to develop their skills and judgement in choice of style.
- 1.9.3 Explain various grading systems and how these might affect tactics, e.g. grading for on-sight vs. red-point, difference between indoor and outdoor grading, bouldering grades.
- 1.9.4 Set appropriate goals to enhance a climber's motivation.

Guidance

Compared to many sports, climbing is refreshingly (and almost infinitely) varied. Whilst there are fundamental techniques to be mastered, the skill lies in the selection and adaptation of techniques to new and challenging situations. This variety in, and importance of, the tactical aspects of climbing is what motivates many climbers in the longer term.

You need to be able to help climbers embrace these challenges and understand that the skills of route-reading, decision making and technique selection are distinct from the technical and physical skills which may be more apparent, yet no more important.

In the planning of a progression and development in these skills, the delivery needs to take place in an environment that stretches the climber and stimulates progression, whilst maintaining and driving motivation. The selection of the appropriate styles and difficulty of climbs and routes are essential skills for coach and climber alike.

1.10 Motor learning

- 1.10.1 Understand stages of motor learning.
- 1.10.2 Identify an appropriate time and method to introduce specific techniques.
- 1.10.3 Understand the link between feedback and motor learning.

Guidance

As climbers progress from novice to skilled performers, it is important to understand how the basic fundamental techniques will be learned, encoded, adapted and developed into habits and skilful patterns of behaviour. You should have enough knowledge to be able to adapt your delivery and organise appropriate practice to facilitate this learning in an optimal



manner. The structure of practice should be matched to appropriate feedback (both in terms of timing, method and style) to suit the development of each individual climber.

2. Long term climber development

- 2.1 Create a fun learning environment.
- 2.2 Demonstrate awareness of the benefits of exposure to multiple sports, especially for young climbers.
- 2.3 Select climbs of appropriate difficulty and style for young climbers at various stages of physical maturity.
- 2.4 Encourage appropriate competition between young climbers.
- 2.5 Recognise growth spurts and understand the effects these may have on performance and injury risk.
- 2.6 Understand the factors that lead to long-term participation.

Guidance

Climbing needs to be both fun and stimulating if climbers are going to maintain their motivation and participate in the long term. It is important that you understand how motivations may change at different stages and ages of a climber's progress. It is important to understand the role that competition can play in the development of young climbers, yet have strategies to help climbers maintain their motivation way beyond aspirations of competition and high performance.

With climbers branching out into many different aspects of climbing and mountaineering, or even transferring their skills into as-yet-undiscovered sports in the future, it is important that you are open minded and encourage transferability and adaptability in early development. This drive and competition needs to be balanced against healthy habits to reduce the risk of injury, especially at crucial stages of development and growth in young climbers.

3. Reflective practice

3.1 Giving feedback

- 3.1.1 Show understanding of the role of feedback for participants by:
 - 3.1.1.1 demonstrating an awareness of when to give appropriate feedback;
 - 3.1.1.2 providing appropriate feedback for participants and other coachesassistants.

Guidance

The ability to develop succinct and valuable feedback for climbers and fellow coaches alike is a skill that needs to be practised (like any other) if you are going to improve in this important aspect of your role.

The ability to give valued and worthwhile feedback is just as crucial for a Development Coach as it is for a Foundation Coach. Furthermore, the quality and detail of feedback is likely to be more critical, as climbers make more marginal gains the more skilled they



become. You should understand the changes in demands that are made on feedback in a climber centred coaching relationship. As a climber makes progress, the need for feedback declines and climbers are more likely to look to you for specific input, at a time to suit them. For you as the coach, the giving of feedback is likely to reduce, being replaced by the use of appropriate questioning and challenge as the climbers become more independent in their skills and development.

3.2 Evaluating

- 3.2.1 Understand the reasons for evaluating a session.
- 3.2.2 Evaluate the success of a session by:
 - 3.2.2.1 assessing the appropriateness of the session aims and objectives, and the activities used to achieve them;
 - 3.2.2.2 contributing effectively to a session review with the coaching team, including self-evaluation.

Guidance

Coaching development in climbers is a dynamic process. The best laid plans will evolve and adapt as progress is made in different ways, or at a different pace, to that which was planned at the outset. It is essential that you have a flexible approach to adopting a reflective style of practice.

Not only is it essential to monitor and reflect upon the development of the climbers, it is helpful to monitor and review the effectiveness of different coaching sessions and ideas in order to continually develop. Sharing this process with Foundation Coaches is imperative to ensure that the coaching team are consistent in their delivery and developing as a team.

Leading in the review and evaluation of sessions is the most influential way of ensuring that sessions are focused on learning outcomes for individual climbers, thus supporting the essence of climber centred coaching.

4. Technical competence

4.1 Personal climbing

- 4.1.1 Demonstrate ability to lead climb at French grade 6a or above and/or
- 4.1.2 Demonstrate ability to climb boulder problems at V3 or above.

Guidance

As a coach of the fundamental skills of climbing movement, it is essential that you have enough technical competence and personal experience of climbing to be able to give clear demonstrations of best practice. There is likely to come a day when a climber starts to out-perform you, and surpass your technical ability. In addition, it is common for climbers of a different age or body shape, to require input on different ways to solve problems and climb particular routes or moves.



It is important that you have enough technical understanding of climbing to be able to deal with these situations, and find alternative ways of providing examples and demonstrations as required. The higher your level of technical climbing competence, the further you will be able to support the development of the climber, before relying on these alternatives.



Performance Coach

The Performance Coach qualification is currently under development.

This high-level coaching qualification will be aimed at coaches who are involved in the long term development of individual climbers and climbing squads/academies.

The emphasis will be on helping talented climbers to fulfil their potential in achieving specific high-performance aims and goals. With a focus on optimising performance over a long term period, the skills of profiling and planning are essential tools for a Performance Coach. With the high intensity and duration of training, balancing performance against potential injury prevention is a key feature.

As a lead coach in an academy, a Performance Coach will also be familiar with recruiting external specialist help, and deploying Foundation and Development Coaches in support of their climbers.



Appendix 1 – Coaching portfolio and session planning

Session planning is an important skill and an underlying tool in developing climber-centred coaching sessions that deliver the desired learning outcomes. It is important to find a system that suits you and suits your style. Furthermore, the planning system should suit the needs of your situation, the needs of your climbers, and facilitate appropriate review and development between you and them.

Whether you choose to view the planning process ‘top down’ (from Performance Coach down to the individual session) or ‘bottom up’ (from the individual session to the long term development), there can be no doubt that the long term development of climbers may come under the care, guidance and coaching of several coaches. It therefore helps to understand, and to be able to explain, where each session fits into the long term picture. It is important for you to develop your own tools, but here are some ideas to help you get started.

Think about the goal setting and session planning session as a nested development – a bit like Russian Matryoshka dolls. Starting with long term plans and aims, it is possible to break the plan down into year-long macro cycles of development. Planning this long term development is usually the remit of the Performance Coach. Within each year, we can break the annual plan down into eight week blocks. Whether these are terms or periods of development leading to assessments or competitions, a climber’s big red-point attempt, or a particular climbing holiday or opportunity, the planning of these blocks is usually the remit of the Development Coach.

Finally, it helps to break each eight-week block down to the individual weeks for the climber. Each week will have a range of complementary sessions to deliver the planned outcomes and development. In turn, each session can be individually planned and delivered. The delivery of this session is often the remit of the Foundation Coach.

Whether we are planning periodised training for an event, or planning a progression through a series of weekly National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme (NICAS) sessions at a club, the nested session planning model helps to see where each session fits into the big picture, and how coaches of all levels work together.



Appendix 2 – Coaching Scheme assessments

The training courses bring together several strands of a climber's and coach's development: the technical understanding of how to climb, the ability to deliver and supervise appropriate sessions and an understanding of how to coach real people – with all their individual nuances and differences. The aim of the assessments is to holistically evaluate the performance of a coach to be able to take care of all these aspects, and brings all the above strands together.

As with any selection process, thorough preparation is the key to maximising the outcome of your assessment. The old adage of 'failing to prepare is preparing to fail' is certainly true so make sure that you have carefully planned out your session and your objectives, and given some thought to what to do should things not go quite as planned. The more prepared you are the more confident you will feel, and this will make a huge difference to those last-minute nerves.

Your assessment will be conducted by a Mountain Training UK approved assessor, whose role is simply to ensure that you are operating at a standard of best practice for coaching.

To better help you prepare for your assessment we have summarised some key points that might be worth thinking about in the lead up to the big day.

- Get off to a good start by making a solid first impression – setting the tone for an assessment can often be a great way of shaking off some early nerves. Start as you mean to go on by being solid and confident in your role as you begin. This can happen even before your session observation starts.
- Be confident – at the point of assessment you will already be an experienced coach. Therefore try to think of your assessment as nothing more than running a session as you normally would. You wouldn't be shy about leading a session at your local centre, so why be shy here? Command your role confidently and you will certainly impress the assessor.
- Communicate well and clearly – make sure that you speak clearly and at a good volume. This will not only put across your excellent coaching tips to everyone in the room but also ensure that everything is clearly understood. This will reduce the likelihood of someone in your session getting the wrong end of the stick. Communication also includes listening so make sure you have time to ask questions of the group and the assessor to ensure that everything is on the right track.
- Don't rush things, take your time! – the assessor will be looking at a snapshot of your coaching skills and therefore is not looking to see you plough through an entire



week's information in 30–45 minutes. It is much better to deliver one or two of your objectives to a high standard than aim for six and loose the quality by rushing through your session.

- Be yourself and not someone you think the assessor wants to see – this will only make you feel more nervous and uncomfortable. We want you to be the best coach you can be on the day, but it's certainly you we are looking for.
- Don't expect everything to go smoothly – you can bet your bottom dollar that on assessment day something will go wrong. Whether it is a tiny issue or something larger, things very rarely go to plan, especially when you are relying on other people's cooperation. Therefore don't worry if things don't go as expected. Try to have a few 'get out of jail' games or activities up your sleeve so if the worst hits you can always fall back on something you know will work well.
- Use notes if needs be – the assessor will be aware that you might be nervous so don't feel that you cannot make any supporting notes to help jog your memory. Flash cards with key coaching points are ideal and can easily be put back in your pocket after you have used them.
- Do your homework – read the syllabus and guidance notes thoroughly and make notes on key points. This is what the assessor will be using during your assessment so in a way it's like us letting you see the exam questions before you take them.

Following the assessment the assessor will provide you with detailed feedback on your performance. This is your time to relax as the stressful part is over and this is the time to discuss your session. Use this time wisely to reflect on what aspects went well and what areas you might want to work on in the future. This is also a great opportunity ask any questions you might have and seek advice if you wish.

In some cases the assessor may wish for you to expand on points they saw during your session. Be prepared for this: be sure to have firmly memorised your session aims so you can link back to them if need be.

In the event that you are deferred, your course director will ensure an effective action plan is created giving you a framework to help you bring those weaker areas up to a high standard. Please be aware that there are no 'part re-assessments' in this scheme and it will be essential to repeat the whole process.



Appendix 3 - Additional information for Foundation Coaches

What to coach at Foundation Coach assessment

The content of the FUNDamentals of Climbing 1 movement workshop provides the basis of ‘what to coach’ at Foundation Coach level.

The core topics are:

- Weight transfer
- Handholds
- Footholds

As a minimum, Foundation Coach candidates should be confident in running effective and engaging coaching sessions on all of the topics above. Candidates who wish to select a different topic or technique to coach should discuss this with the provider in advance of the practical assessment.

DLOG entries for Foundation Coaches

Candidates should record a variety of coaching sessions in DLOG remembering that quality is as important as quantity. For example, entering a regular NICAS session using the ‘weekly’ frequency option will reflect volume, but there is limited value in identical entries, so some of them should be edited to add specific details from the session.

A minimum of 15 logged coaching sessions since completing Foundation Coach training is expected, and may include roped climbing as well as bouldering both indoors and outdoors. These sessions should focus on delivery of the FUNDamental climbing techniques.

Reflective comments must be added for at least five entries in the ‘description’ box. These comments should go beyond simply what was done to include an evaluation of the success of a session measured against the aims, as well as ideas about progressions for the climbers, improvements in delivery, and what was learned as a coach.

Used in this way DLOG can become a diary of coaching development and a valuable mechanism through which providers and other experienced coaches can give feedback. Tick the ‘flagged’ box to draw attention to the most relevant entries.

Lesson plans for Foundation Coaches

There are many coaching session lesson plan templates available and candidates should experiment with various formats to develop their own preferred style. As a minimum it should include; topic/technique, aims/learning outcomes, lesson structure with timings, venue and climber information and reflective observations (see above). For Foundation Coach assessment, lesson plan topics should focus on FUNDamental climbing techniques. The provider will make it clear how many are required, and they should be uploaded as files in DLOG.



Appendix 4 – Additional information for Development Coaches

What to coach at Development Coach assessment

There is not a prescriptive list of topics/techniques to be assessed at Development Coach level. Instead, candidates should be confident in the delivery of progressive coaching sessions to intermediate or improver climbers that could include technical, tactical, physiological or psychological topics.

DLOG entries for Development Coaches

Candidates preparing for Development Coach assessment should have extensive experience of delivering progressive coaching sessions to improving climbers.

A minimum of 40 logged coaching sessions since completing Development Coach training is expected, and may include roped climbing as well as bouldering both indoors and outdoors. These sessions should demonstrate progression and development over a number of weeks.

Reflective comments must be added for at least 10 entries in the ‘description’ tab. These comments should include an evaluation of the session and demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the coaching process.

Used in this way DLOG can demonstrate progress in your coaching development and be a valuable mechanism through which providers and other experienced coaches can give feedback. If you tick the ‘flagged’ box you can draw attention to the most relevant entries.

Session planning for Development Coaches

In addition to recording coaching sessions in DLOG, written session plans allow candidates to evidence development in the quality of their coaching. These may take a similar form to the lesson plans used by Foundation Coaches, but would demonstrate progression over a number of sessions, as well as in-depth reflective observations that demonstrate coaching development. This information should be uploaded as files in DLOG, along with other supporting evidence such as examples of written training programmes.