Coaching Scheme Handbook

Covering Level One and Level Two

v1.2 February 2026

ClimbMT

COACHING SCHEME LEVEL ONE AND LEVEL TWO

Participation Statement

ClimbMT recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities that involve the potential for serious injury or death. Those participating in these activities should be aware of these risks and assume responsibility for their own actions. That being said, professional climbing instructors and coaches can help clients manage risks, learn valuable skills and maximise their enjoyment of the sport. Amongst other roles, ClimbMT provides training and assessment courses and associated literature to help instructors and coaches facilitate the best possible experiences for their clients as they enjoy climbing and mountaineering.

ClimbMT Mission Statement

To be the leader in education, standards, and advocacy for professional guides and climbing instructors in the Maltese Islands.

ClimbMT Code of Ethics

1. Managing risk and the welfare of our clients is our prime concern.

2. Where possible and practical, we should provide assistance to persons having difficulty by offering help which is appropriate under the circumstances. In providing assistance to others, we should avoid compromising the welfare of our clients.

3. Our clients have the right to expect us to be up-to-date on the latest methods and techniques and to use appropriate and well-functioning equipment.

4. We must be aware of our own physical, technical, and experiential limitations. We should use routes and terrain that are within our expertise and capabilities.

5. We are expected to teach and practice Leave No Trace principles and to be knowledgeable of local natural history.

6. As professionals, we must be culturally competent. We must treat clients, the public, our fellow guides, and others with respect. ClimbMT assumes that all human beings, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or creed, are entitled to enjoy the mountains without threat of discrimination, diminution of their values and customs, or disrespect. A ClimbMT professional is expected to be an ambassador of human compassion and understanding.

7. As representatives of ClimbMT we must conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects well on ClimbMT. This applies on ClimbMT programs as well as anytime we are interacting with clients, the public, our fellow guides, government agencies, and others.

8. We must understand our level of training and certification as defined by the ClimbMT Scope of Practice (SOP). This includes accurately and unambiguously representing the level of our training and certification to clients, the public, government agencies, and others. We will work only within our training and certification level(s) as defined by the SOP.

9. We must work within the regulatory, permit, certification, and aspirant requirements of the country and/or land management agency in or under which we intend to work. We must obey all laws, rules, and regulations applicable to our guiding or other activities.

Introduction

This handbook contains information for Coaching Scheme candidates and ClimbMT licensed Providers offering Coaching Scheme Programmes. Operational frameworks and guidelines are provided which ensure that continuity is maintained from programme to programme and between instructors and examiners. Continuity provides a uniform standard for candidates who are taught, coached, and examined by a variety of instructors and examiners over a period of years. Continuity also assists in ensuring the programme presents a professional image to candidates and outside observers, and it eases the workload of organising, preparing, and operating courses.

Audience

Candidates on Coaching Scheme courses and assessments. This programme and related documentation was compiled to help candidates prepare for and complete the ClimbMT Coaching Scheme courses and certification assessments.

Acknowledgment

Grateful thanks are due to Ian Dunn for providing the source material for this handbook.

The scope of the scheme

The Coaching Scheme is an assessed award scheme to assist climbers, instructors, and coaches in delivering high quality coaching to raise the climbing level of clients to agreed goals.

The coaching scheme currently has two levels, and each level has 3 supporting training workshops followed by an assessment. Each workshop will have both classroom and practical sessions and last approximately 7 hours.

A qualified Level One / Level Two Climbing Coach can coach the skills and techniques of rock-climbing to a recognised standard.

These skills can be used in a variety of environments:

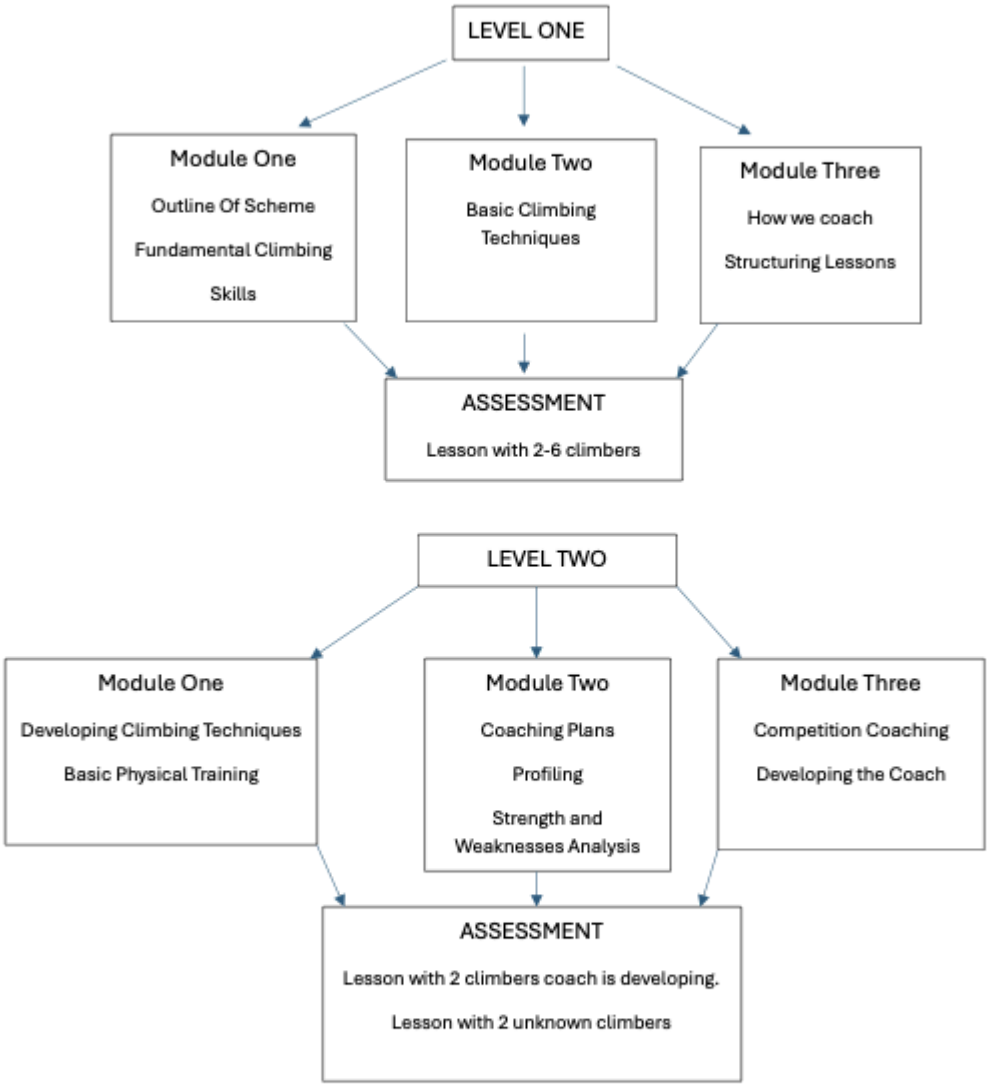
- Indoor and outdoor bouldering venues
- Artificial Climbing Structures
- Single and multi-pitch rock climbing venues

Exclusions

The scheme does not cover:

- The safety / instructional skills of rock climbing and mountaineering
- Group supervision
- First Aid
- Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults

MALTA COACHING SCHEME



The Scheme
There are two levels to the scheme: a Level One and a Level Two Coach. The scheme is progressive with training and assessments, and it is necessary to complete all modules in each level prior to going for assessment. It is a pre-requisite of the Level Two assessment to have completed a Level One Assessment.

Pre-requisites for the scheme.

- You must have a genuine interest in coaching individuals and groups in rock climbing.
- You must have had a minimum of 12 months climbing experience.
- You should be able to boulder a minimum grade of 6A (Fontainbleu) on a variety of surfaces.
- You must be a member of ClimbMT

Level One Coach
A level one coach is effective in coaching the fundamental skills of climbing. They can deliver stimulating lessons to a group of climbers. The lessons may be part of a series of lessons or an award scheme (NICAS). They will be able to give feedback during and after the lesson to the clients. They can also evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching activities. They will maintain a safe and effective coaching environment.

Training
You can complete the three training modules for Level One in whichever order is convenient, however you must complete the three modules prior to Assessment. You must have satisfied the climbing centre where you are doing your coaching that you can operate in their environment safely.

Consolidation
A consolidation period between the training modules and the assessment is good practice. There is no time limit between training and assessment, however candidates should be coaching regularly (minimum 6 times per year).

Assessment for Level One

- You must be a minimum of 16 years old.
- You must have completed all three training modules.
- You must have coached a minimum of 20 lessons with lesson plans since training, or in the last 12 months, 10 lessons plans must have reflective notes attached as to how the lessons went. Lessons must be carried out after training but before assessment.
- You must prepare a lesson plan for your Assessment Lesson
- You must have satisfied the climbing centre where you are doing your assessment that you can operate in their environment safely.
- You should have undertaken Safeguarding training and First Aid training.
- Present a recent (less than 6 months) clean Police conduct report. For candidates who have lived in Malta for less than 24 months a report from their home country police force is required.

Level Two Coach
A level two coach would have completed and passed the assessment for the level one coach. They can plan a series of lessons with structured progression over a three-to-six-month period. They can tailor the lessons to the individual. They can mentor climbers and level one coaches. They can monitor and evaluate the plans and the individual lessons, and they will encourage reflective practice. They will maintain a safe and effective coaching environment.

Training
You can complete the three training modules for Level Two in whichever order is convenient, however you must complete the three modules prior to Assessment. You should be climbing for a minimum period of 12 months.
You must have satisfied the climbing centre where you are doing your coaching that you can operate in their environment safely.

Consolidation
A consolidation period between the training modules and the assessment is good practice. There is no time limit between training and assessment, however candidates should be coaching regularly (minimum 12 times per year).
The standard for assessment is high and variety is important when developing coaching skills, every opportunity to practise should be taken to consolidate learning.

Assessment for Level Two
- You must be 18 years of age.
- You must have completed all three training modules.
- You must submit a minimum of three development plans written and delivered to a variety of different climbers. Each development plan must include reflective notes evaluating its effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.
- You must have delivered a minimum of 50 coaching sessions, each supported by a lesson plan. At least 20 of these sessions must have been delivered within the previous 12 months. You must submit documentary evidence of all 50 lesson plans. A minimum of 10 lesson plans must include reflective notes evaluating how the session progressed.
  Lesson plans may be long-form, concise, or presented in bullet-point format. Regardless of format, each lesson plan must clearly demonstrate:
  - Session structure
  - Learning outcomes
  - Progression
  - Safety considerations

  A session log alone does not constitute a lesson plan.
- Documentation must be submitted 14 calendar days prior to your assessment date.
- You must show your assessor your development plan for the students you bring to your assessment and justify why you are delivering the session.
- You must have satisfied the climbing centre where you are doing your assessment that you can operate in their environment safely.

- You should have undertaken Safeguarding training and First Aid training.
- Present a recent (less than 6 months) clean Police conduct report. For candidates who have lived in Malta for less than 24 months a report from their home country police force is required.

Course Structure
The training modules for Level One and Level Two are laid out below:

Level One Module One Outline of the Scheme, Fundamental Skills of Climbing

A full day's workshop covering a safe climbing environment, how the scheme works, basic climbing rules for climbing efficiently, teaching footwork and basic route reading.

Level One Module Two Coaching Basic Climbing techniques

A full day's workshop breaking down the basic climbing techniques and how to teach them. How we climb on steeper terrain, analysing and observing climbers.

Level One Module Three How we Coach Structuring Lessons

A full day's workshop looking at the requirements of a coach, how to write learning outcomes and lesson plans, Observation, and evaluation techniques. Providing better feedback. The requirements of the Level One Assessment.

Level Two Module One Developing Climbing Techniques & Basic Physical Training

A full day's workshop looking at advanced climbing techniques and dynamic movement. An introduction to Physical Training and how to write simple training plans.

Level Two Module Two Coaching Plans Profiling and Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

A full day's workshop looking at Profiling and writing coaching plans. Video Analysis. Strengths and Weakness analysis both of clients and coach.

Level Two Module Three Developing the Coach Competition Coaching

A full day's workshop on coaching the Technical Tactical Physical and Psychological elements of climbing and Competition Preparation. The requirements of the Level Two Assessment.

Assessments

Level One Assessment

The assessment will have a minimum of 2.5 hours contact time.
The session will have a minimum of 2 climbers and a maximum of 6 climbers to be coached. Climbers will be novice climbers.
Candidate briefing and interview 30 minutes.
Introductions with Climbers to be coached 15 minutes.
The candidate runs a coaching session with, warm up, activity / activities, cooldown, feedback / summary 90 minutes.
Results and debrief 30 minutes.

Level Two Assessment

The assessment will have a minimum of 5.5 hours contact time.
The two sessions will have a minimum of 2 climbers and a maximum of 3 climbers to be coached. Climbers will be experienced climbers.

Candidate interview and appraisal of Development Plans (45 minutes).
First session With Climbers the Coach is Developing
Candidate briefing (15 minutes).
Introductions with Climbers to be coached (15 minutes).
Candidate run coaching session with, warm up, activity / activities, cooldown, feedback / summary (90 minutes).
Second Session with experienced climbers not regularly coached by the Candidate
Appraisal of candidates and writing lesson plan (60 minutes)
Candidate briefing (15 minutes).
Introductions with Climbers to be coached (15 minutes).
Candidate run coaching session with, warm up, activity / activities, cooldown, feedback / summary (90 minutes).
Results and debrief (30 minutes).

Course Delivery
Training
Courses are delivered by Providers appointed by ClimbMT
Level One Minimum course size 2 maximum course size 12
Level Two Minimum course size 2 maximum course size 10

The instructor:student ratio must never exceed 1:6. When the group cohort exceeds 6 students an additional instructor or instructor's assistant is required.

Assessment
Assessments are delivered by Providers appointed by ClimbMT
Level One Maximum assessment size 1
Level Two Maximum assessment size 1

Level One Coach

A level one coach is effective in coaching the fundamental skills of climbing. They can deliver stimulating lessons to a group of climbers. The lessons may be part of a series of lessons or an award scheme (NICAS). They will be able to give feedback during and after the lesson to the clients. They can also evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching activities. They will maintain a safe and effective coaching environment.

1. Coaching Behaviours

   Information: Level One Coaches need to be able to deliver sessions to a wide range of individuals. An understanding of different learning styles and ensuring sessions are inclusive, welcoming, and supportive.

   1.1. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of learning styles.
   1.2. Demonstrate an ability to adapt the coaching style to meet individual needs.

2. Planning

   Information: Identifying learning outcomes and the aim of the session help deliver structured sessions with clear direction. The plan may have been written by a Level Two Coach with contributions from a Level One coach.

   2.1. Prepare a session with learning objectives and progression.
   2.2. Prepare all resources required for the session.
   2.3. Be aware and comply with current legislation regarding children and vulnerable people.

3. Preparing and Concluding

   Information: Clear instructions and understanding the plan for the lesson ensure the session runs smoothly and effectively. Ensure everyone is warmed up.

   3.1. Introduce yourself and clients.
   3.2. Introduce the session.
   3.3. Introduce house rules.
   3.4. Ask about injuries.
   3.5. Conduct the session in a professional manner.
   3.6. Run an appropriate Warm Up.
   3.7. Run an appropriate Cool Down.
   3.8. Give appropriate individual feedback.
   3.9. Summarise the Learning Objectives achieved.

4. Managing

   Information: A Level One Coach should be able manage the session effectively.

   4.1. Show an awareness of group management strategies and techniques.
   4.2. Use space e-ectively.
   4.3. Manage individual and group needs e-ectively.d) e) f) Use language appropriate to groups age and ability.
   4.4. Maintain the attention of all.
   4.5. Demonstrate an awareness of when to give appropriate feedback.

5. Coaching Skills

   Information: A Level One Coach should be able to question the participants, give good demonstrations, and feedback, observe and analyse and be enthusiastic and supportive.

   5.1. Ask appropriate questions.
   5.2. Respond to answers and questions.

5.3. Encourage intrinsic feedback.
5.4. Provide and deliver e-ective demonstrations both verbal and visual.
5.5. Give clear simply e-ective instructions.
5.6. Offer appropriate encouragement.
5.7. Identify the key coaching points throughout.
5.8. Ensure progressions at appropriate time.
5.9. Maintain a good level of activity throughout.
5.10. Ensure the sessions is appropriate to the group's ability.
5.11. Stand in appropriate positions to observe clients.
5.12. Be able to advise and correct techniques as appropriate.
5.13. Be enthusiastic.
5.14. Make session fun and enjoyable.

6. Movement Skills
   Information: It is important to have a range of games and fun activities to aid learning the basic climbing movements. Picking the appropriate games for different groups.
   6.1. Explain demonstrate and evaluate the fundamental movement skills and principles of climbing.
   6.2. Identify and apply appropriate games and activities to develop the
   6.3. fundamental skills of climbing movement.
7. Sporting Values
   Information: Understanding that climbing can be a lifelong sport and encouraging climbers to pursue and continue climbing. As well as supporting fair play in competitions.
   7.1. Help to deliver a positive attitude to lifelong participation.
   7.2. Develop a sporting approach to competition including fairness.
8. Evaluation and Reflection
   Information: Be able to give appropriate feedback at the right time and the right amount. Be able to summarise effectively a lesson.
   8.1. Understand and explain the reasons for evaluating a session.
   8.2. Assess the session with regards to its appropriateness, aims and objectives and activities used.

A Level One Coach should have the following skills and attributes:

- Observation and analysis.
- Simple clear delivery.
- Organisation of practise.
- Develop intrinsic motivation.
- Give good feedback.
- Reflection and planning.
- Safe supportive sessions.

Level Two Coach

A Level Two Coach can plan a series of lessons with structured progression over a three-to-six-month period. They can tailor the lessons to the individual. They can mentor climbers and level one coaches. They can monitor and evaluate the plans and the individual lessons, and they will encourage reflective practice. They will maintain a safe and effective coaching environment.

1. Coaching Behaviours

   Information: Coaching experienced climbers is different to coaching novices, a good understanding of the stages of skill acquisition and how to tailor your session to different ability levels.

   1.1. Demonstrate a knowledge of learning styles and how people learn new skills.
   1.2. Demonstrate an ability to adapt the coaching style to meet individual needs.
   1.3. Demonstrate flexibility to adapt coaching in response to changing circumstances.
   1.4. Identify the responsibilities and di-erences between a Level One and Level Two Coach

2. Planning

   Information: Profiling your clients and writing a development plan with long term and short-term goals is vital for climbers' improvement.

   2.1. Prepare a development plan for di-erent groups of climbers, including sessions with learning objectives and structured progression.
   2.2. Prepare all resources required for the sessions.
   2.3. Ensure sessions and plan have realistic aims and achievable goals and objectives.
   2.4. Be aware and comply with current legislation regarding children and vulnerable people.

3. Preparing and Concluding

   Information: running effective sessions of different abilities and styles.

   3.1. Introduce yourself and clients.
   3.2. Introduce the session.
   3.3. Introduce house rules.
   3.4. Ask about injuries.
   3.5. Conduct the session in a professional manner.
   3.6. Run an appropriate Warm Up.
   3.7. Run an appropriate Cool Down.
   3.8. Give appropriate individual feedback.
   3.9. Summarise the Learning Objectives achieved.
   3.10. Store equipment used appropriately.

4. Managing

   Information: being able to delegate and share learning outcomes with other coaches as well giving good feedback is very important.

   4.1. Show an awareness of group management strategies and techniques.
   4.2. Use space effectively.
   4.3. Manage individual and group needs effectively.
   4.4. Use language appropriate to groups age and ability.
   4.5. Maintain the attention of all.

4.6. Demonstrate an awareness of when to give appropriate feedback.
4.7. Demonstrate an ability to work with other coaches and assistants.
4.8. Be aware of how climber's personal lives can affect participation and performance.
4.9. Understand and be able to facilitate experiential learning.
4.10. Understand the possible implications of sport/ competition on self-confidence.

5. Coaching Skills

Information: A Level Two Coach should be able to question the participants, give good demonstrations, and feedback, observe and analyse and be enthusiastic and supportive. Level Two Coaches are responsible for the motivation, development, and welfare of the climbers over a series of sessions, and it is important to understand diversity and inclusivity to deliver coaching in a safe and supportive environment. It is important to understand the importance of individual practice and learning and the effects this can have on motivation and performance.

5.1. Ask appropriate questions.
5.2. Respond to answers and questions.
5.3. Encourage intrinsic feedback.
5.4. Provide and deliver effective demonstrations both verbal and visual.
5.5. Give clear simply effective instructions.
5.6. Offer appropriate encouragement.
5.7. Identify the key coaching points throughout.
5.8. Ensure progressions at appropriate time.
5.9. Maintain a good level of activity throughout.
5.10. Ensure the sessions are appropriate to the group's ability.
5.11. Stand in appropriate positions to observe clients.
5.12. Be able to advise and correct techniques as appropriate.
5.13. Be enthusiastic.
5.14. Make sessions fun and enjoyable.

6. Movement Skills

Information: As climbers develop there is a need for detailed analysis and a good understanding of climbing movement. Feedback is key here and you need a high level of technical climbing movement, either gained by climbing at a high level or by a significant amount of observation and analysis of high-level climbing. Video is very useful in this regard.

6.1. Explain, demonstrate and evaluate the fundamental movement skills and principals of climbing.
6.2. Identify and apply appropriate games and activities to develop the fundamental skills of climbing movement.
6.3. Observe, analyse and evaluate students' climbing movement and provide appropriate coaching.

7. Sporting Values

Information: Whilst it is easy to focus on youthful high performance, varied pathways exist, and it is important to promote and understand the longer-term benefits of a health sporting habit for life. Coaches are role models and need to behave appropriately.

7.1. Help to deliver a positive attitude to lifelong participation.

7.2. Develop basic teamwork between individuals.
7.3. Develop communication between climbers, coaches, and peers.
7.4. Develop a sporting approach to competition including fairness.
7.5. Develop the climber's awareness of the climbing environment and the ethics of the sport.
7.6. Encourage participation in other climbing activities and other sports.

8. Physiology

Information: Coaches who plan and deliver specific training programmes need to have a good understanding of climber's physiology. This knowledge should include the writing of training programmes whilst reducing the risk of injury. You should be able to educate climbers on the benefits of a healthy diet, hydration and sleep and provide support on these topics. Coaches working with young climbers should be aware of the impact of training on young bodies at crucial stages of development.

8.1. Evaluate the physical fitness of those you coach.
8.2. Understand fatigue and how it can affect the ability to learn.
8.3. Identify and evaluate the physical factors why students fail on routes.
8.4. Understand and explain the body's energy production systems.
8.5. Have a basic understanding of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.
8.6. Have a basic understanding of bone, muscle, tendon ligaments and injury prevention.
8.7. Understand the dangers of overtraining, for different age groups.

9. Psychology

Information: Coaches need to understand how climbers progress and how their learning impacts their long-term motivation. Climbers will develop specific needs and a good coach can adapt their coaching accordingly.

9.1. Demonstrate knowledge of the stages of skill acquisition.
9.2. Evaluate and adopt the preferred/ most effective learning style for the individual.
9.3. Motivate and help to maintain motivation of the students.
9.4. Help students to reduce the negative effects of stress.
9.5. Help students set appropriate long term and short-term goals.

10. Evaluation and Reflection

Information: It is important to understand how basic techniques will be developed into skilful performance. The structure of practice should be matched to appropriate feedback to suit each individual.

10.1. Understand and explain the reasons for evaluating a session.
10.2. Assess the session with regards to its appropriateness, aims and objectives and activities used.
10.3. Understand stages of motor learning

A Level Two Coach should have the following skills and attributes:

- Observation and analysis.
- Simple clear delivery.
- The ability to write development plans.
- To be able to profile climbers, physically, technically, psychologically, and tactically.
- Organisation of practice.
- Develop intrinsic motivation.

- Give good feedback.
- Reflection and planning.
- Safe supportive sessions.