

Mountain Training's Review of Climbing Awards

Interim Report for MTC, MTE, MTNI, MTS, BOS & MTUK meetings -February/March 2017

ACTION: Members are asked by the working group to support this report

1. INTRODUCTION

2. The Members of MTUK adopted a strategy for the Climbing Awards Review at their meeting on 10.10.15. The aim of the review was to identify and make recommendations regarding: Improvements to any of the eight individual awards; Improvements to the pathways between the eight awards and identify any gaps in Mountain Training's provision. A seven stage process was agreed with the original aim being to present firm recommendations that would include revised or new syllabi to the Members in time for the October 2016 meeting and then launch this to the public in September 2017. Evidently this timeline has been revised and the current aim is to provide these proposals in June 2017 and a launch for autumn 2018.
3. The large working group has three sets of people in it: Seven MTUK Board member volunteers (the advocates/critics) -Andy Boorman, Carlo Forte, Dave Monteith, Andy Newton, Mike Pinder, Mike Rosser, Shaun Roberts/ Jon Jones; Two MTUK Directors (the facilitators) - Graeme Morrison and Tony Halliwell (assisted by Roger Ward and Dan Downes); eleven staff within the Mountain Training network ('the workforce') - Jane Carney, Trevor Fisher, Jon Garside, Guy Jarvis, George McEwan, Libby Peter, Mark Walker, Bryn Williams and John Cousins, plus Cath Luke as our project administrator and Nicola Jasieniecka and Belinda Fear providing communications and membership advice.
4. Over eighteen months the working group has held seven face to face meetings, four dedicated meetings in Penrith and three connected to MTUK members' meetings. There has also been a large number of meetings of sub groups ('ad hoc groups') and much related correspondence.
5. Qualitative research was conducted by the working group in autumn 2015 and then the University of Central Lancashire was commissioned in January 2016 to conduct the quantitative phase at a cost of £16.5k (paid for by MTUK and MTE with funding assistance from Sport England). Their report was presented to the working group in June 2016.
6. Recent work has focused on the framework for a revised climbing qualification scheme and this report provides members of the Mountain Training network with
 - a. a summary of the evidence gathered in the research phases
 - b. a proposed outline framework
 - c. a brief explanation of the scope/remit/concept of each course or qualification
7. Subject to any feedback from members the working group aims to develop specific syllabi for each component course or qualification in time for members meetings in June 2017.
8. It is acknowledged that this 'model scheme' will then need to be analysed in terms of the viability of each component and our capacity to launch and then maintain it all.

9. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT A NEW CLIMBING QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE

10. UCLan report and survey findings:

- a. 78.4% of individuals surveyed were satisfied with the awards (though over 50% only 'somewhat satisfied'). However these are inherently biased figures from an inclusion point of view as the surveys will not have accounted for those who looked at our schemes and turned away....
- b. A lower percentage of females were 'completely satisfied' - 17.2% female, 26% male. A higher percentage of females thought we require additional awards - 40.2% female, 30% male.
- c. Over 2/3 of respondents used the SPA as their entry point into MT schemes. Of these 68% stayed there. ie: it is the only climbing scheme they participate in. The SPA is accessed less by women and exited less by them (56% of female candidates make it their entry point compared to 65% for men)
- d. 91% of survey respondents said that you need to be a climber to be an instructor.
- e. The SPA and MIA had some support for remit and content change (35% and 26% respectively).
- f. 48% of organisations surveyed use local endorsements to increase their staff's deployment, and not MT awards. About two thirds of these are endorsed to operate independently and one third to operate alongside a qualified instructor. These are mainly for the activities of indoor climbing (site specific), indoor lead climbing (easier to do in-house rather than the CWLA?), abseiling (Scouts etc?) and outdoor leading. Outdoor leading would appear to be an under supported market.
- g. 73% of organisations endorsed staff to work alongside qualified staff outdoors (assistants?).
- h. Teaching skills were rated highly by both organisations and individuals. Communication skills were rated 4th after essential technical skills.
- i. Organisation survey (p.21): 'The need for a single pitch leading award emerges clearly. Secondly, a need for greater alignment across award levels of teaching skill was seen as desirable. Finally, responses suggested a recognition that not all climbing is mountain based'.
- j. Individual survey (p.26): 'A need for additional awards to meet several varied needs; Assistant awards (low level monitoring of activity, Climbing Wall and single pitch), single pitch award, (assistant as cited earlier and the teaching of lead)'
- k. Individual survey (p.37): 'Interaction with peers and other instructors (community of practice) emerges as the most significant factor in progression, structured experience between training and assessment. Experience, as both a climber and instructor prior to training emerges as a significant factor'.

11. Themes that emerge from the UCLan survey:

- a. The need to strengthen the 'Instructor' role
- b. Support for an assistant role in the earlier awards
- c. Developing teaching skills throughout the awards
- d. Learning from and maximising experience
- e. The need for trainer education

12. Outcomes required of the new climbing award structure –Working Group summary, autumn 2016 (designed to increase participation, retention and diversity in the activity):

- a. Enable increased diversity of instructors (ensure and develop reasonable accessibility and access to all Mountain Training awards for aspiring candidates)

- b. Encourage progression through award pathways. Progression can be horizontal as well as vertical (supporting existing qualification at a level)
 - c. Develop high quality instructors who reflect the educational philosophy of Mountain Training
 - d. Enable a process that values the accreditation of prior learning and quality experience, incorporating some reflective practice.
 - e. Create strong bridges from participation into Mountain Training qualification pathways
13. **SCOPE OF SCHEMES;** This is based on the output of recent working group meetings (NOTE: All names are “placeholder” names for now).
14. **Rock Skills – Personal skills training**
- a. **Rock Skills 1:** One/two days (?): an introduction to outdoor climbing including bouldering (with an emphasis on movement skills) and top roped climbing
 - b. **Rock Skills 2:** Two days (16 hours): the skills to second routes on a single pitch crag.
 - c. **Rock Skills 3:** Two days (16 hours): an introduction to lead climbing- sport and trad.
15. **Climbing Assistant – Personal proficiency:** Operate under the direct supervision of a qualified instructor. The assistant will supervise under direction from the instructor throughout the session to help enthuse and manage the group’s safety and wellbeing. The instructor remains responsible for the group at all times. This scheme should appeal to participants wishing to start their development into the world of climbing instruction and who wish to assist in the supervision of climbing activities within the indoor climbing wall, and the outdoor rock climbing single pitch environment. Open to age 16+. CWA and SPA syllabi will need to include the management of assistants (the CARWG acknowledges that this is a novel innovation that will require considerable further discussion).
16. **Climbing Wall Award - qualification**
- Evidence broadly supports the scheme.
 - Alternative pathways should be explored.
 - Includes ‘how to teach’ and ‘how to manage assistants’.
17. **Climbing Wall Leading Award - qualification**
- Includes ‘Developing Climbers’ content.
 - Evidence broadly supports the scheme.
 - Alternative pathways should be explored.
18. **Single Pitch Award - qualification**
- Scope remains the same.
 - Increase in minimum training contact time from 20hrs, to 24hrs delivered over a minimum of 3 days.
 - Guidance to emphasize an 8hr indoor contact time. This could be delivered through evening sessions.
 - Includes ‘how to teach’ and ‘how to manage assistants’.
 - Decrease of minimum assessment contact time to 16 hours.
19. **Single Pitch Leading Award – new qualification**
- Scope venue same as current SPA.
 - Includes ‘Developing Climbers’ content.
 - The scheme would provide training and assessment in the skills required to teach and train lead climbing activities at both traditional and sport climbing single pitch venues.
20. **Mountaineering Instructor Award**
- Evidence broadly supports the scheme.
 - Alternative pathways should be explored and a syllabus review conducted.
21. **Mountaineering Instructor Certificate**
- Evidence broadly supports the scheme.
 - Alternative pathways should be explored and a syllabus review conducted.

22. Coaching Scheme

- Evidence broadly supports the scheme.
- Alternative pathways should be explored, eg: for boulderers
- Extend the remit to cover outdoor climbing.

Written by Bryn Williams, George McEwan, Guy Jarvis and Jon Garside and edited by the Working Group meeting on 9/2/17

NOTE: ALL NAMES OF QUALIFICATIONS ARE PLACEHOLDER NAMES. FINAL NAMES AND CANDIDATE DESCRIPTORS STILL TO BE AGREED.

