



ACIA – MPG – Multi Pitch Guide - Syllabus

Scope – A qualified Multi Pitch Guide can guide, teach and supervise all aspects of rock climbing and abseil activities in Single and Multi-pitch environments, including guiding clients on Multi pitch trad routes. In doing so a Multi Pitch Guide always maintains a high level of control over clients (clients do not operate independently or lead climb)

Qualification structure - the structure to progress through the qualification is as below,

- Prerequisite personal experience and qualifications
- Training course attendance - 3 days
- Consolidation period
- Assessment course – 2 days

Prerequisite experience and qualifications

- Competent and experienced with multi pitch trad lead climbing. Logged experience of multi pitch climbing in a range of styles and areas (across multiple states)
- Qualified TRG or SPG – (or equivalency granted)

Training course attendance

- Attendance on training course, 3-day practical training course delivered by ACIA ITA's through an ACIA approved provider. (or exemption from training granted)
- Training course Max ratio – (Day 1 – 6 to 1) (Days 2 /3 – 3 to 1) – Participants to ITA'S

Consolidation period

- Logged experience showing at least four days guiding / supervising (assisting / co- delivering) Multi pitch climbing activities.
- Logged experience, Minimum - logged 40 routes of multi pitch lead climbing in variety of areas and styles putting "guiding" principles into practice.
- This mandatory logged experience is considered the minimum to enable prospective guides to develop the skills, knowledge and abilities, with candidates looking toward assessment ideally surpassing this

Assessment course

- Successful completion of the 2-day practical assessment course – competence with all aspects of the syllabus and all prerequisites is required.
- Successful completion of theory tasks (written assignment / knowledge test)
- Current first aid qualification
- Assessment course Max ratio 2 to 1 (Participants to ITA's)



Syllabus

Technical Competence

- **Equipment** – Demonstrate appropriate use, care, and maintenance of a range of commonly used climbing equipment. Including an understanding of manufacturers recommendations and good practice. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of different options of harnesses, helmets, belay devices, ropes, slings, karabiners, pulleys, rope grabs/ ascenders, trad gear (nuts, hexes, cams) etc.
- **Anchors and systems** – Demonstrate an ability and understanding of evaluating in-situ anchors (bolt, bollards, natural features etc), and an ability to place and evaluate trad protection (nut, hexes, cams), be able to select, place and use appropriate solid anchors to construct systems appropriate for guiding in multi pitch climbing environments. Use equipment and selected anchors to create belay systems that are beyond doubt and are designed to maximise the safety of all (participants and guides) when in use. Show efficient and organised stance management to increase safety and reduce potential problems.
- **Belaying skills** – Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding and ability to use belay devices (manual and assisted braking) and systems, including the ability to perform checks and use appropriate communication, belay efficiently (including belaying seconds in parallel), lower safely and smoothly, hold falls and convert to hoists if required.
- **Personal climbing skills and knowledge** – Lead climb multi pitch trad routes (to at least Grade 16) in a manner that is competent, assured and demonstrates technique, shows a clear understanding of good practice, and knowledge around the overall safety chain involved in climbing (route selection / decision making, closing systems, situational awareness).
- **Abseiling skills** – Show an understanding of, and ability to use self-protected abseil systems, and retrievable abseil systems in multi pitch environments, including using stacked abseil systems, strategies for guiding clients during multi pitch abseil descents/ retreats.
- **Background knowledge** – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the development of climbing, its ethics, and current trends / directions

Guidance notes –

Competence and experience are essential if you are to guide and supervise others, the foundation to do this is within your own knowledge, understanding and ability. It is important that you are both familiar and capable with a range of equipment and techniques, and that you can choose appropriate equipment and systems for different contexts and situations during multi pitch guiding.

As a climbing guide you will be a role model to others, it is therefore important to provide good examples of systematic approaches that will prevent error and always maximise safety, the prerequisite and experience requirements for the course exist to ensure you can develop the required judgement, they should be considered minimums, with candidates ideally surpassing them.



Client Management and decision making

- **Planning and preparing** – Prepare a plan for the guided climbing activity. The plan should address appropriate routes and progressions to meet the aims and objectives of your clients, whilst retaining the ability to respond to client / situational needs. Show an awareness and understanding around “safety management plans” who is responsible for these and their content (identify the risks of the planned activities, control measures and specific safety / emergency procedures etc)
- **Managing your clients** – Provide appropriate and effective briefings, coaching and supervision to facilitate a safe productive outcome. Ensure the level of supervision provided is appropriate to allow you to maintain a high level of control throughout. This may include adapting plans to meet participants displayed ability levels
- **Decision making and using effective safety management techniques** – demonstrate the ability to dynamically risk assess and make good decisions on route / site selection and hazards (route direction, friable / loose rock, belayer competence, edge risks etc). Use techniques appropriate to the context to manage risks during client belaying. Ensure effective communication systems and safe practices are maintained.
Guide clients up multi pitch routes, whilst applying a range of techniques and effective safety management processes to ensure efficiency and safety.

Guidance notes –

Multi Pitch climbing and abseiling activities have inherent risks that are beyond basic single pitch environments, as a guide we have a duty to make decisions to keep ourselves and clients safe throughout the activity, because of this it is very important that we maintain a high level of control over the situation, and continually / dynamically risk assess to ensure we apply appropriate safety systems and back-ups at all times. The rate at which clients will progress will differ, having a full range of options of approaches to teaching will allow you to continue to assist them in developing specific skills in a safe manner.

Judgement and decision making around hazards, risks and control measures is essential to operating as a climbing guide, as a guide delivering practical sessions we should be dynamically risk assessing and making decisions to ensure safety, this should be done within the framework of a structured safety management system (at an overall organisational level), the safety management system we are operating within, and aims / objectives of our clients should inform and influence the activities and progressions that we choose to include in our plan.

The complexity of guiding in multi pitch environments is often underestimated, it differs significantly from personal climbing, it must be assumed that clients may make mistakes, so the back-up systems chosen and the methods of supervision must match the level of competence. Ultimately as the climbing guide you are responsible for the safety of your clients, and you must be certain that you have situational control and back-up systems in place to prevent serious injury or negative outcomes.



Instructional and teaching skills

- **Knowledge and demonstration of techniques** – Provide appropriate levels of knowledge for the task and clear concise demonstrations that give clients good visual images to learn from
- **Gradual build up processes, progressions, and activities** – Utilise a gradual build up process, with a logical sequence of progressions and activities, to ensure the development and consolidation of required knowledge, skills, and experience.
- **Adapt instructional style and approach to meet individual needs** – Use instructional and teaching strategies that work for the individuals you are with, make changes to the plan based on the observable progression of your clients
- **Observe and provide constructive feedback to help clients improve performance** – Observe performance and identify the areas that most need improvement, provide constructive feedback and coaching to help clients improve their ability.
- **Specific skills and techniques** – show a clear ability to teach participants to,
 1. Correctly fit Harnesses, helmets and prepare themselves for climbing activities
 2. Safely and efficiently belay climbers and lead climbers, including safe back up belay systems
 3. Tie into the climbing rope
 4. Use effective buddy checks and good communication during multi pitch climbing
 5. Climb with technique to improve ability and move safely in multi pitch climbing environments
 6. Abseil in a safe and controlled manner with appropriate back-up systems
 7. Safely belay you as the “guide” whilst you lead them up multi pitch routes
 8. Safely follow multi pitch routes as the “second” and effectively remove placed protection
 9. Understand the processes of multi pitch climbing and remain safe on the stance

Guidance notes –

Our role as a climbing guide is to provide opportunities and help clients experience climbing and progress their ability and knowledge, to achieve this, you will require a range of abilities beyond your own climbing competence, your ability to communicate, inspire, and provide positive instruction will be essential in supporting their experience.

The ability to use simple instructional strategies and models (Demo, explanation, practice, correction) will be required, gaining understanding through questioning, observation, and providing feedback are skills that are outside of normal climbing that you will need to develop and refine to allow you to best meet the needs of those you work with.



Problem solving and improvised rescue

- **Assisting from below** – Be able to ascend a rope efficiently to allow you to approach from below to solve problems, using the best available equipment for the task
- **Assisting from above** – Be able to use assisted abseil and counterbalance abseil techniques to allow efficient approach and problem solving from above. Understand and add additional friction to system where required
- **Lowering** – Be able to lower climbers if required, with a range of belay devices, including bypassing knots during lowering.
- **Hoisting** – Be able to raise a climber to solve issues, understand a range of assisted and unassisted hoists, including creating extra advantage, increasing efficiency and using the best available equipment for the task
- **Bypassing systems** – Be able to bypass and escape loaded belay systems, to allow systems to be changed or modified to solve problems, improve efficiency in raising / lowering.
- **Stabilise injured climber** – Be able to create improvised chest harness to stabilise and keep climber in a better position.
- **Back-ups** – Implement appropriate back-up systems whilst problem solving to ensure that hazards and risk are not increased in an unacceptable manner.
- **Problem solve** – Be able to assess a situation and apply a varied range of skills and techniques to solve issues in a simple and safe manner appropriate to the context

Guidance notes –

The systems and supervision that we choose and implement whilst guiding Multi Pitch climbing can pre-empt and prevent many issues, however multi pitch climbing is a more dynamic and complex environment than basic single pitch climbing, so we need to have a solid foundation of transferable problem solving and improvised rescue skills to deal with whatever issues arise. The one thing that can be guaranteed is that if issues do happen, they won't be exactly the same as you have practiced previously.

Having the ability to solve issues that are unexpected or unusual is essential, the environment that we operate in (Multi Pitch crags) have many variables, our knowledge and skill are the best preparation for dealing with these.

Ensuring problem solving and improvised rescue skills are well practiced and smooth is important to ensure that we are prepared if they are ever required.



The climbing environment

- **Access** – Understand access rules and requirements, role model positive approaches to crag access and use
- **Conservation** – Understand the natural environments that you are in, role model “leave no trace principles” and manage your group to minimise impact
- **Etiquette and ethics** – understand climbing etiquette and ethics broadly and specifically (for the local crags), role model positive approaches on all occasions

Guidance notes –

Climbing outdoors involves being in natural outdoor environments, because of this there will always be conflicting interests in relation to access, conservation, and ethics. It is important that as guides we both understand these issues (from both sides) and role model responsible approaches to these issues.

Involvement with state based climbing organisations and national organisations will help in maintaining an awareness of current issues or thought processes.