CLIMBING AWARDS REVIEW 2016

Final Report presented 13th June 2016

Terms of Reference.

This report has been completed at the request of Mountain Training as a review of the current climbing awards offered by Mountain Training. The report has been designed in conjunction with the Climbing Awards Working Group and is for Mountain Training use. This internal report is designed to inform the future development of the climbing instructional awards offered by Mountain Training and to influence climbing instructor training and assessment.

Glossary

For clarity we have used a range of terms throughout this report. We recognise that views differ on the use of this terminology and that does, in fact, represent an essential debate that **must** be had and resolved in Mountain Training. This challenge is highlighted in the recommendations at the end of this report.

Competency Focused/Proceduralised Assessment:

Evaluation by observed behaviours; best used on 'right or wrong' situations. For example, "demonstrate how to tie a bowline." Such assessments are said to be "proceduralised" because they focus solely on the procedures needed – the "how" to do it.

Expertise Focused/Declarative Assessment:

Evaluation of both behaviours and reasoning; best used for 'shades of grey' situations. For example, "show different methods of teaching climbing to a mixed group of learners." Such assessments include evaluations of both procedural (how) and declarative (when and why/why not) knowledge.

Instructing, Teaching, Coaching:

Methods of communicating information, usually with different aims:

Instructing – Communicating, evaluating and developing basic skills, or at least skills novel to the learner.

Teaching – Communicating, evaluating and developing skills, but often with additional agendas such as personal development in parallel.

Coaching – Developing skills to a higher level, generally so that the learner can perform in competition, to a higher grade of climbing or with greater independence.

Sports Climbing:

Climbing activity that is protected by manufactured protection such as bolts (indoor or out).

Trad Climbing:

Climbing activity that is protected by 'placed' protection such as 'nuts and cams'.

INTRODUCTION

Mountain Training has contracted the Institute of Coaching and Performance (ICaP) at the University of Central Lancashire to conduct a review of the eight climbing awards administered by Mountain Training. This research forms stages 3, 4, 5 and 6 of a National Strategy, examining a range of climbing awards that have been developed over the past 45 years. In summary, these awards cover a wide range of terrain, environments, difficulty, types and styles of climbing; as such, they have the potential to meet different end user requirements. The awards originated with the Mountaineering Instructors Certificate (MIC) which, in turn, evolved from the Mountain Leadership awards (Summer and Winter). From this starting point, the scheme has continued to develop, via the Mountaineering Instructors Award (MIA), Single Pitch Awards (SPA) and Climbing Wall Awards[*] (CWA), to include two (with a third pending) Climbing Coaching Awards. Given this complexity, the scheme may appear convoluted.

Notably, however, the remit, content and structure of these awards is not comprehensive and anomalies exist. Furthermore, reflecting the growth in popularity of climbing in the UK, the need for climbing instructors has increased. This has potentially changed the way in which instructors develop their expertise and also impacted on student expectations during tuition. This growth in demand for climbing instruction reflects the diverse nature of modern climbing activity in the UK. Therefore, Mountain Training are seeking a review to ensure that the award structure reflects the modern context and demand for climbing instructors. For example, technical difficulties such as water margin activities have been a longstanding issue. Also, newer challenges illustrate the growth and increased diversity of climbing. In turn, this has created some new instructional contexts such as teaching lead climbing in single pitch environments or multi-pitch climbing in non-mountain environments such as sea cliffs or gorges (e.g., Swanage or Cheddar). Finally, the emergence of climbing as an accessible sport, influenced in part by sports climbing, raises agendas such as the inclusivity of climbing in complex social settings. Such issues extend beyond the historic focus on technicality and safety into a range of broader social challenges which include the teaching and coaching of climbing.

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[*] Includes; Climbing Wall Award, Climbing Wall Leading Award, Climbing Wall Abseil Endorsement

It should also be acknowledged that those being taught to climb may have different expectations and perceptions of climbing instruction than those embodied in the current award structure. Indeed, the current awards may not be in concert with each other. Accordingly, the review is intended to examine the relative content and relationship of the current awards to each other, to the climbing community and to end user groups. The aim of this review is to ensure that the awards meet the demands of the modern climbing community, instructors, their employers/deployers and, of course, the end users – the climbers themselves. The review focuses on gaps or inconstancies in provision and makes recommendations for development. In addition, it identifies other relevant and pertinent areas for consideration. The purpose being to assist in the design of a coherent and clear pathway of awards that meet the modern challenges in climbing instruction.

Method and Approach

To provide an overarching evaluation of climbing instructors and their employers/deployers, it was important to sample a large number of participants. Accordingly, this project utilised two online surveys, incorporating both multiple choice and open-ended questions.

Preliminary Survey Development

In developing these surveys, several steps were taken in accordance with research guidelines (Grey, 2014; Robson, 2011) which were supported by our previous experience of survey development (e.g., Carson, Collins & MacNamara, 2013). As the first step, a set of questions were generated through consultation with Mountain Training, based on the initial brief (the tender document; Appendix A) in which a series of questions where outlined. In association with this, objectives were agreed for each target group (i.e., instructors and employers/deployers). These questions and participant response options were then supplemented and/or informed by consideration of the existing professional practice research, Mountain Training's own literature and our experiences as educators/coaches within the outdoor domain. Draft surveys were then returned to Mountain Training for them to evaluate the perceived effectiveness against the project aims. Following feedback, revisions were resubmitted for approval before conducting *cognitive interviews* (Willis, DeMatio & Harris-Kojetin, 1999) with a sample of 8 representative participants (6 coaches, 2 award employers/deployers). These provided the opportunity for the survey to be completed by members of the targeted groups and, crucially, for us to probe participants' understanding of each question to remove any misunderstandings, inconsistencies or inappropriate response options. Any revisions required following this procedure were then incorporated into the survey and an update provided to Mountain Training for their consideration. This process was repeated several times until all parties were satisfied.

Participants

With the assistance of Mountain Training acting as 'gate keeper', the survey link was distributed to approximately 11,500 participants who were trained or qualified in at least one award. The second survey was distributed to 600 organisations that employ/deploy Mountain Training award holders (identified by Mountain Training). All participants in the individual

survey were at least 18 years of age, as required for training/accreditation. Participants in the organisations' survey held a position of responsibility within the organisation to enable the most accurate and representative response.

Data Collection

Participants were approached by email, sent directly via Mountain Training, with an invitation to participate by completing the online survey (both the instructors' and organisations' surveys can be found in Appendices B and C). The email explained the project aims along with an electronic link to the survey provided by the tool SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com). Upon entering the survey, participants were presented with a brief information page and question to obtain consent. Progression to the survey required the consent box to be ticked. Participants did not provide their names; therefore, all data were anonymised. In brief, the employers/deployers' survey addressed the following themes:

- The nature of the organisation and use/deployment of climbing staff
- Views on the existing Mountain Training awards, including title and remit
- Any required changes or pressing issues concerning the current awards

In similar fashion, the instructors' survey addressed the following themes:

- Current award structure, including titles, content and remit
- Personal professional details, including qualifications and work with employers
- The relative importance of skills for climbing instruction
- Personal demographic information

Based on the pilot process, we estimated that the survey should take approximately 20–25 minutes to complete. Finally, a recruitment incentive was provided to individual instructors by highlighting the chance to win in a prize draw and also the possible professional benefits that may come from the overall findings.

Data Analysis

Data were automatically filtered and exported by the SurveyMonkey website. To enable meaningful comparisons within the data-set, responses were filtered by qualification, gender, age, organisation type, qualification level etc. These exports provided descriptive statistics and qualitative responses for each question. Quantitative data were converted and examined by use of the software package Microsoft Office Excel 2013 (Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA). Qualitative responses from the open-ended questions were analysed using conventional *content* and *thematic analysis* procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Grey, 2014; Robson, 2011) through use of the QSR NVivo 11 software package. For each qualitative question, responses were coded to reflect their meaning, then grouped together with other similar responses into themes until data could not be reduced any further (i.e., *saturation* had been achieved). This process was conducted collaboratively with an independent coder, who was not involved in the earlier stages of the project, to provide increased trustworthiness toward the interpretation of responses.

Overall Response Rates

A total of 173 out of 600 (29%) organisations submitted completed responses, with an absolute completion[†] rate of 65%. A total of 1,409 out of 11,500 (12.25%) instructors submitted responses. The sample consisted of 1,120 (79.5%) males, 260 females (18.5%) and 29 (2%) who preferred not to say. The absolute completion rate was 47%.
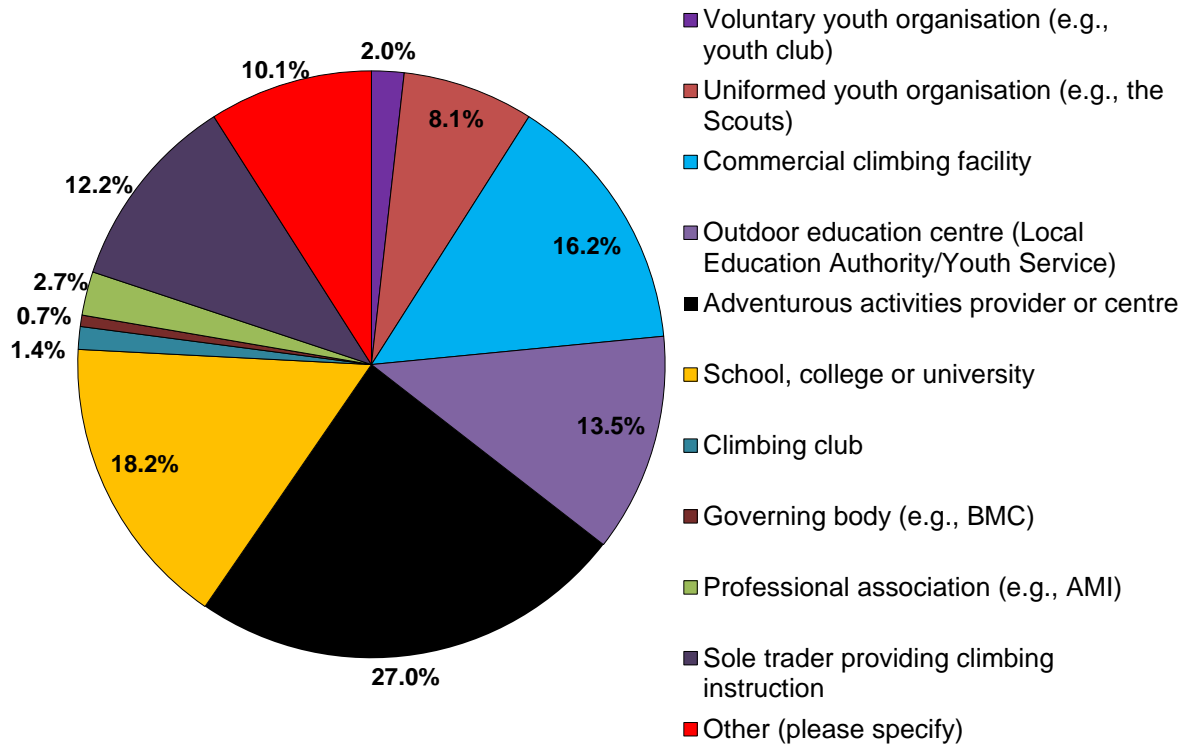
Part 1: Raw Data – What did they say?

Both qualitative (written) and quantitative (numeric) data are presented below for each of the questions answered by the participants. We begin by reporting the findings from the organisations', followed by the individuals' survey. As is to be expected when conducting research of this kind, not all participants responded to *every* question asked. As such, to provide the most representative data-set, we have included an indication of the number of responses to each question. Accordingly, there are a different number of responses per question. The total number of responses received for each question is indicated by the '*n*' value in brackets throughout the results section of the report.

[†] The total number of participants completing the survey, expressed as a percentage of the participants who started the survey.

Organisations' Survey

UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR ORGANISATION, USE OF CLIMBING AND CLIMBING STAFF

O1. Our Organisation is a: ($n = 148$)

Pie chart legend:
- Voluntary youth organisation (e.g., youth club)
- Uniformed youth organisation (e.g., the Scouts)
- Commercial climbing facility
- Outdoor education centre (Local Education Authority/Youth Service)
- Adventurous activities provider or centre
- School, college or university
- Climbing club
- Governing body (e.g., BMC)
- Professional association (e.g., AMI)
- Sole trader providing climbing instruction
- Other (please specify)

Chart values: 2.0%, 8.1%, 16.2%, 13.5%, 27.0%, 18.2%, 1.4%, 0.7%, 2.7%, 12.2%, 10.1%
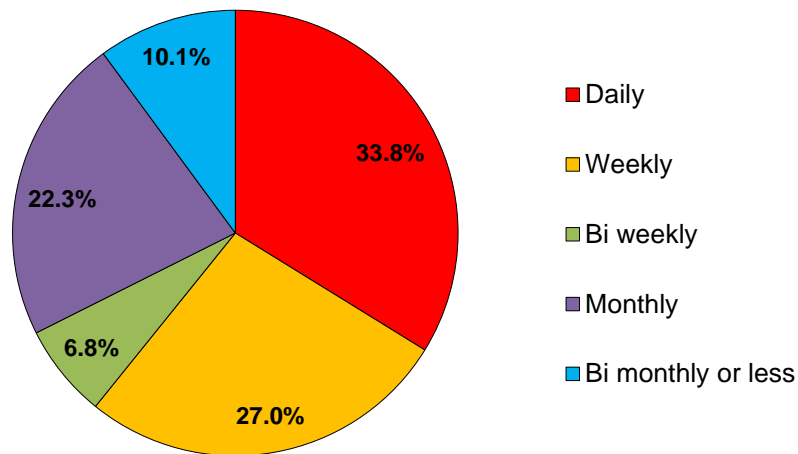
Other responses:

Participants ($n = 7$) who considered that the categories provided above did not correctly identify their organisation status responded;
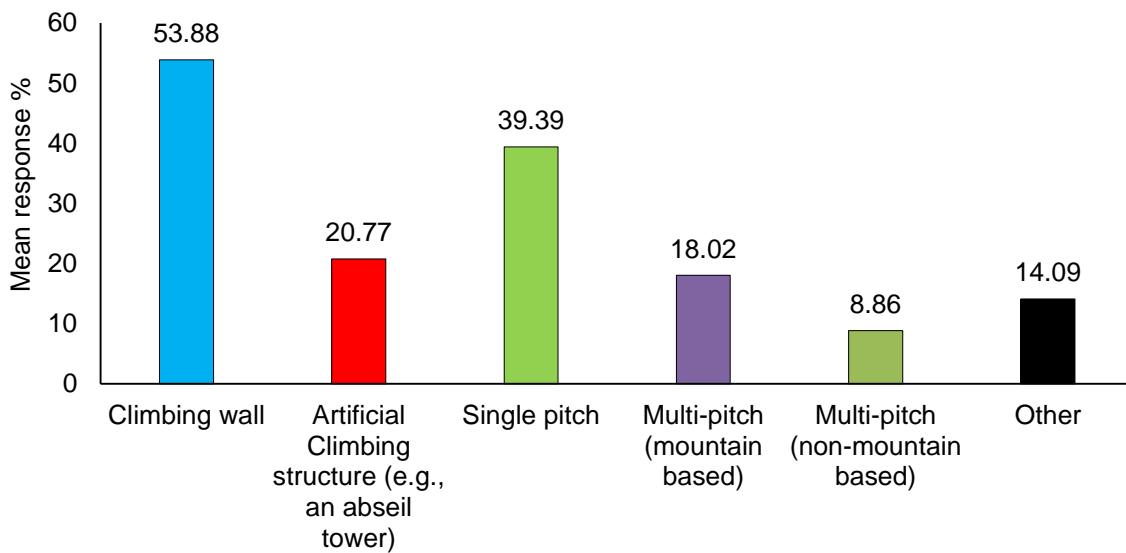NB. We have provided a suggested category in (brackets).

1. Mainly provide NGB courses (ML, SPA, HML) plus some mountaineering, rock climbing and caving (Sole trader providing climbing instruction).
2. Leisure Trust[*].
3. Voluntary group introducing people to outdoor leadership (voluntary youth organisation).
4. Commercial Outdoor Education Centre (Adventurous activities provider or centre).
5. Outdoor Education Centre Charity (Outdoor education centre).
6. Commercial Mountaineering Company (Adventurous activities provider or centre).

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[*] Insufficient accuracy in response to allocate group.

O2. How frequently do you put on climbing events? (*n* = 148)

- ■ Daily — 33.8%
- ■ Weekly — 27.0%
- ■ Bi weekly — 6.8%
- ■ Monthly — 22.3%
- ■ Bi monthly or less — 10.1%

Estimate what percentage of this activity is based on a: (*n* = 148)

Mean response %

| Category	Mean
Climbing wall	53.88
Artificial Climbing structure (e.g., an abseil tower)	20.77
Single pitch	39.39
Multi-pitch (mountain based)	18.02
Multi-pitch (non-mountain based)	8.86
Other	14.09

O3. Approximately how many staff teach climbing, including freelance staff, within your organisation? (*n* = 140)

	Response Average
Number within each organisation who hold a Mountain Training climbing award.	16.6
Number within each organisation who do not hold a Mountain Training climbing award.	9.4
Total number of staff.	1,724

4. Of your staff team, please estimate how many have completed training for an award but are not yet qualified. ($n = 140$)
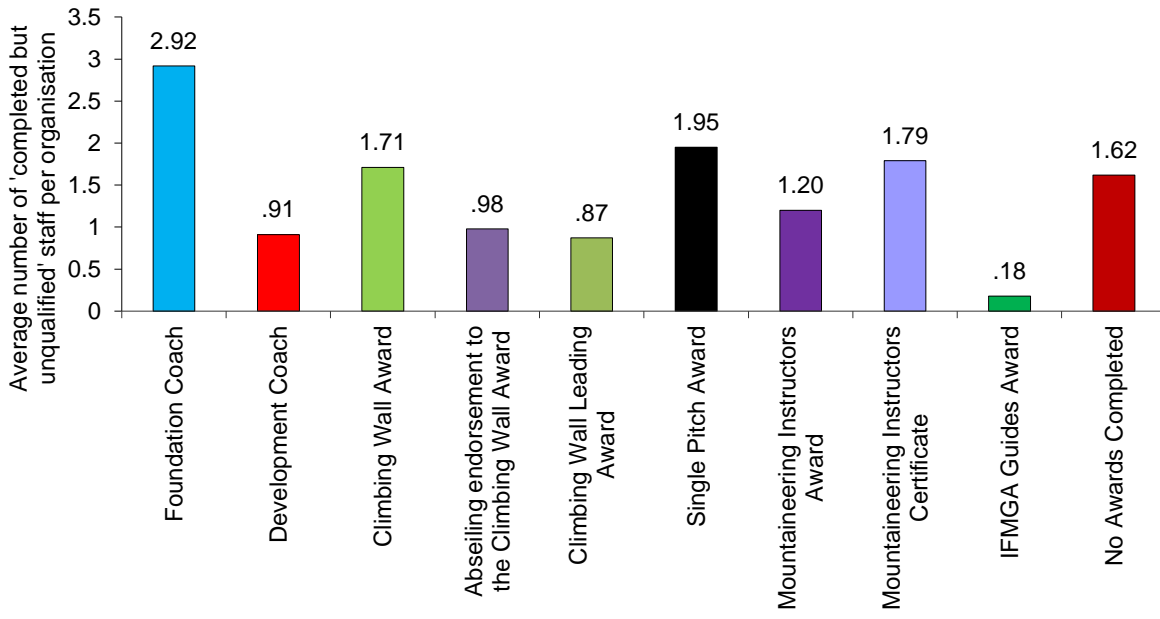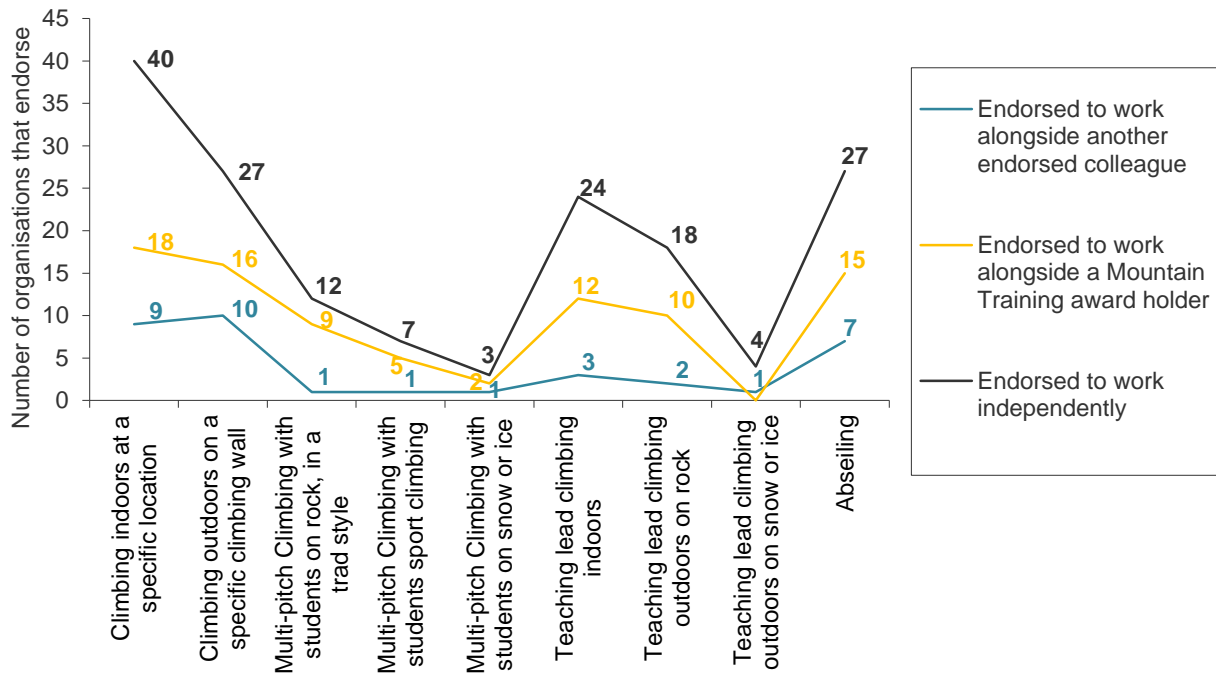

O5. Of your staff, please estimate how many hold the following awards: ($n = 140$)
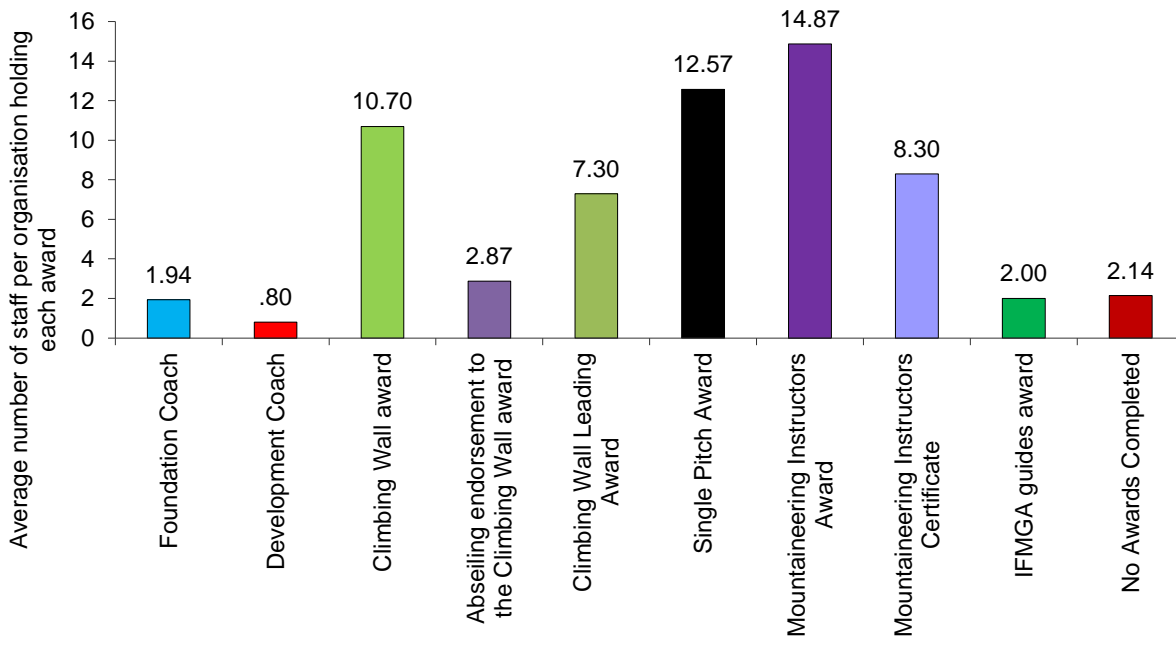
O6. Do you use organisational endorsements to broaden qualified staffs' deployment possibilities? That is, to permit them to do activities for which they are not specifically Mountain Training qualified. ($n = 138$)
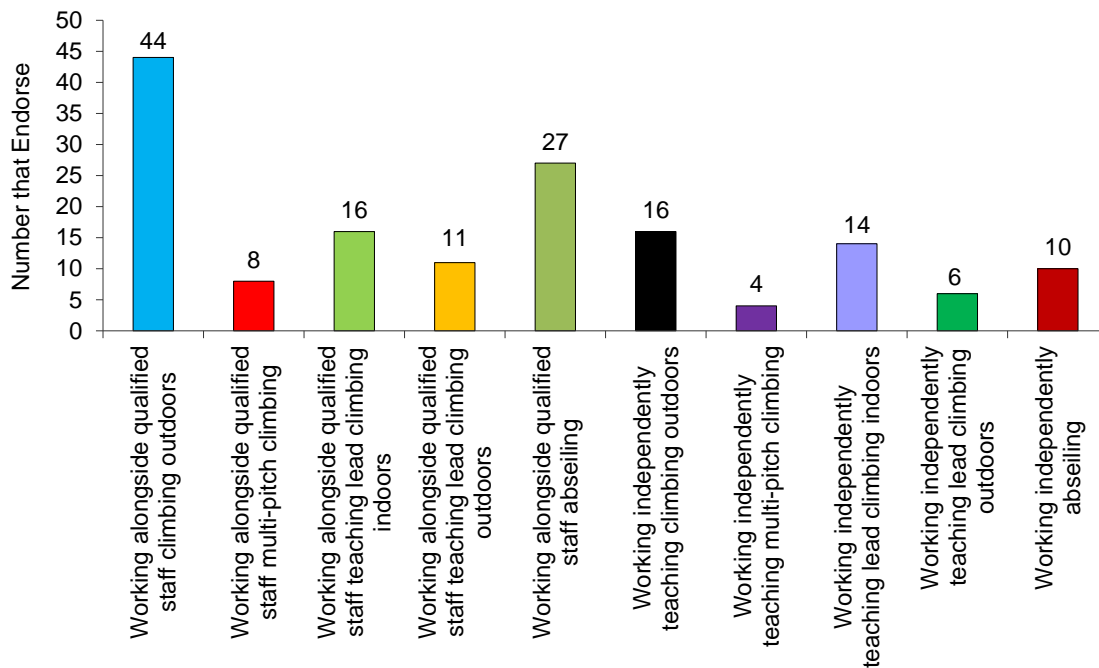
Yes = 59%, No = 41%

07. What activities does your organisation endorse? ($n = 84$)

O8. Do you use organisational endorsements to broaden unqualified staffs' deployment possibilities? ($n = 134$)

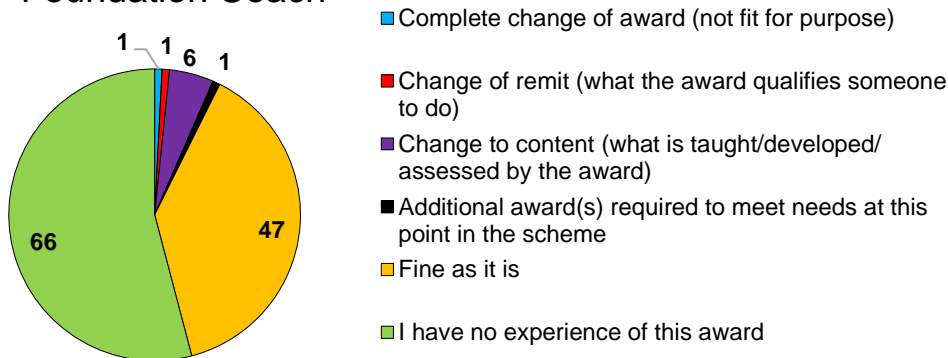| Response	%
Yes	48%
No	19%
We do not use staff who do not hold Mountain Training awards	33%

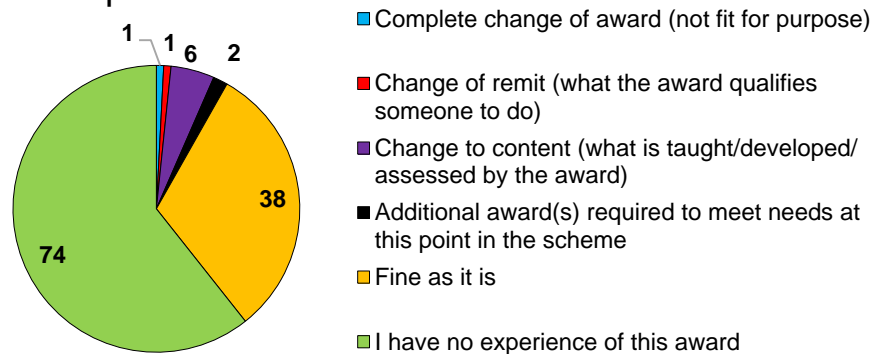09. What activities does your organisation endorse? (*n* = 60)

AWARD TITLES AND REMIT

O10. In the view of your organisation, what are the development needs for the current climbing awards? (*n* = 122)

Foundation Coach

- Complete change of award (not fit for purpose)
- Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- Fine as it is
- I have no experience of this award

Development Coach

- Complete change of award (not fit for purpose)
- Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- Fine as it is
- I have no experience of this award

13

Climbing Wall award

- ■ Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- ■ Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- ■ Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- □ Fine as it is
- ■ I have no experience of this award

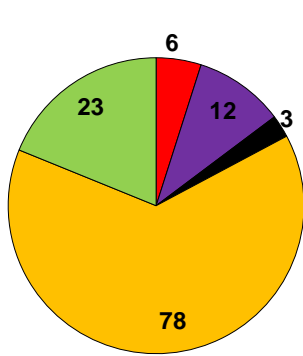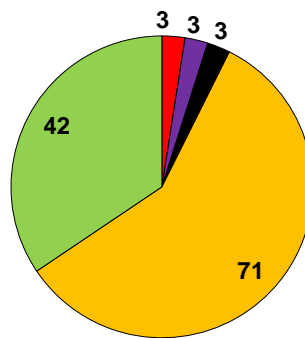## Abseiling endorsement to the Climbing Wall award

- ■ Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- ■ Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- ■ Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- □ Fine as it is
- ■ I have no experience of this award

Climbing Wall Leading Award

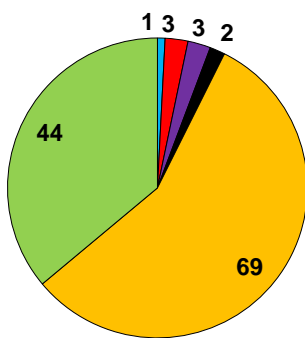- ■ Complete change of award (not fit for purpose)
- ■ Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- ■ Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- ■ Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- □ Fine as it is
- ■ I have no experience of this award

Single Pitch Award

- ■ Complete change of award (not fit for purpose)
- ■ Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- ■ Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- ■ Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- □ Fine as it is
- ■ I have no experience of this award

Mountaineering Instructors Award
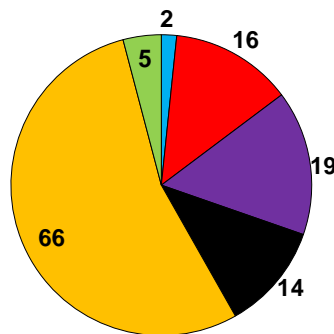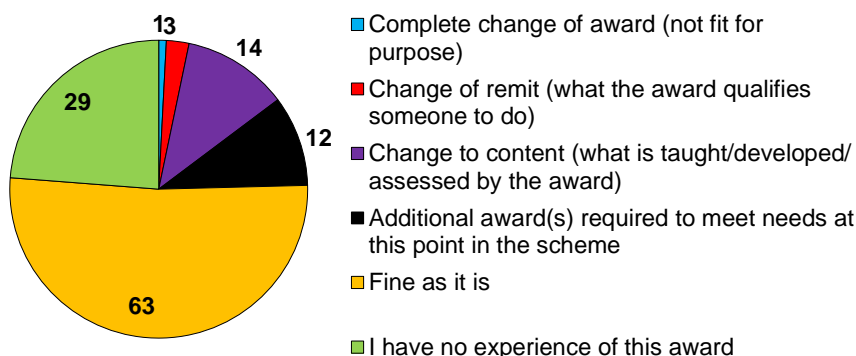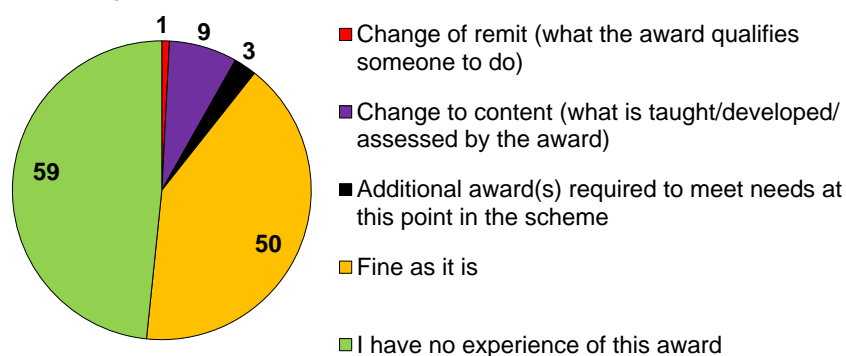

- Complete change of award (not fit for purpose)
- Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- Fine as it is
- I have no experience of this award

Values: 13, 14, 29, 12, 63

Mountaineering Instructors Certificate

- Change of remit (what the award qualifies someone to do)
- Change to content (what is taught/developed/ assessed by the award)
- Additional award(s) required to meet needs at this point in the scheme
- Fine as it is
- I have no experience of this award

Values: 1, 9, 3, 59, 50

If you answered in favour of change, in a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) please expand on your choice. ($n = 65$)

Foundation and Development Coach (17 higher-order themes)

Themes focused on an expansion of role (inclusive of supervision and bouldering) and an updating/development of content (teaching skills and technical skills).

Climbing Wall suite of Awards (20 higher-order themes)

Themes around the abseil module were strongly related to the broader use of man-made structures. The need to supervise two ropes and the development of teaching skills emerged as other practical concerns.

Single Pitch Award (43 higher-order themes)

Links to other awards and schemes (e.g., CWA, Nicas, FUNdamentals) emerged as a recurrent theme. Alongside this, the theme of climbing ability emerged; this included suggestions for a split (+/−) in the award.

# Mountaineering Instructional Awards (31 higher-order themes)

A need to differentiate the climbing from the mountaineering role became clear. A split regarding grades for personal performance (similar to that outlined above) also emerged for both the award and certificate, with no clear preference emerging. No linkage to other awards emerged; however, a development of teaching skills as distinct from guiding appeared as a significant consideration.

O11. We are interested in understanding the breadth of how the awards are used. Please indicate which current awards you believe cover the supervision or teaching of each activity listed below. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total response count ($n = 118$)

Activities	Climbing Coaching Awards	Climbing Wall Awards	Single Pitch Award	Mountaineering Climbing Awards	Endorsement by another body	A new Mountain Training award should be created
Supervising an abseil from a viaduct	0	7	76	51	19	4
Teaching lead climbing on a single pitch crag	3	0	13	85	8	26
Teaching climbing on a single pitch sea cliff accessed by abseil	2	0	11	88	8	10
Supervision on a single-pitch cliff for top-roping activities	0	0	95	36	8	3
Teaching a climber who aspires to be bouldering at a high level	81	20	27	25	7	6
Teaching at a road side, non-mountain multi pitch venue	3	0	19	78	6	12

Teaching lead climbing on a local, bolted quarry	3	3	14	75	8	25

O12. Using your experience of deploying staff on climbing activities, please rate the following skills with regards to importance in your organisation as a climbing instructor. (n = 117)
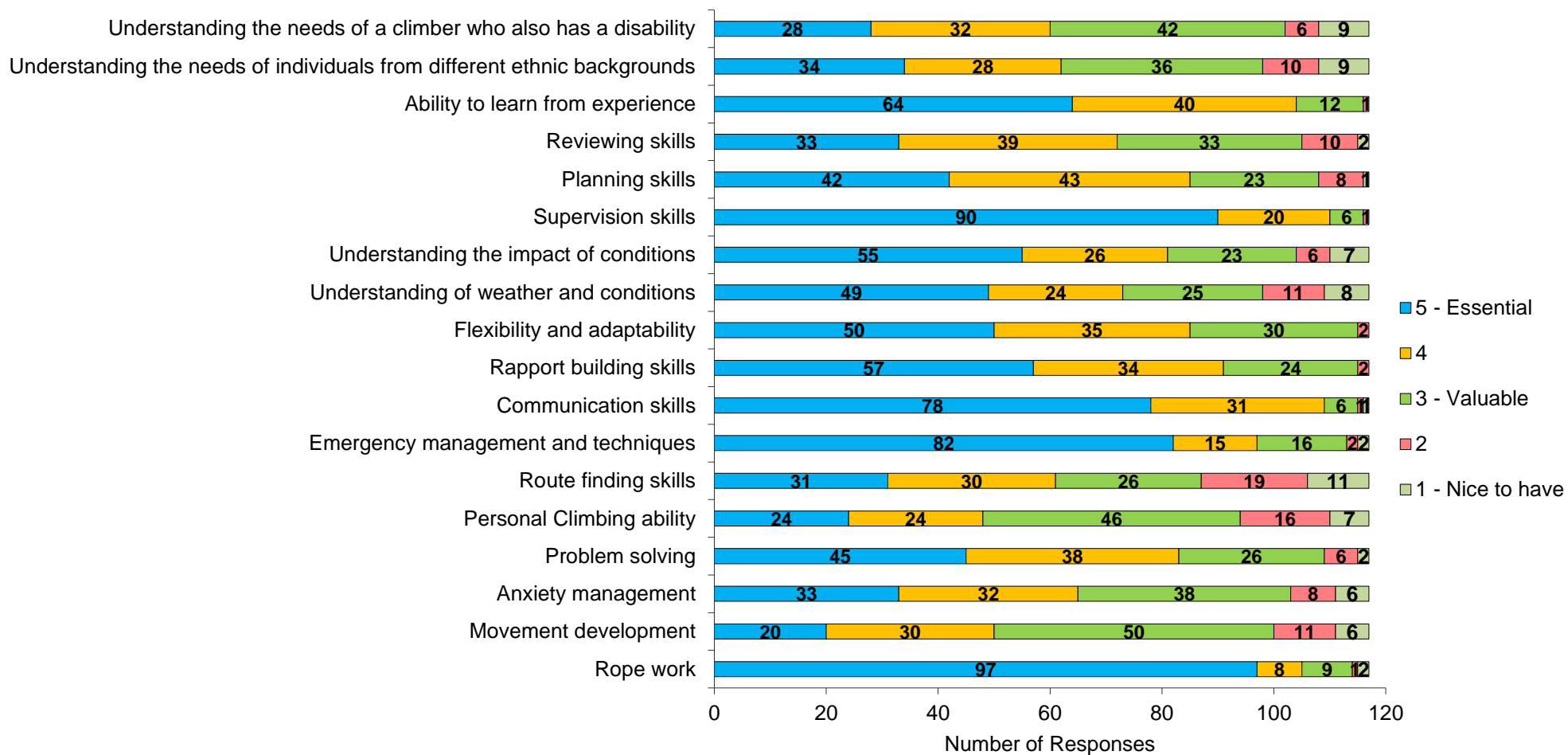
O13. Reflecting on changes you would like to see to the following awards, where do you feel these should be made? (*n* = 117)
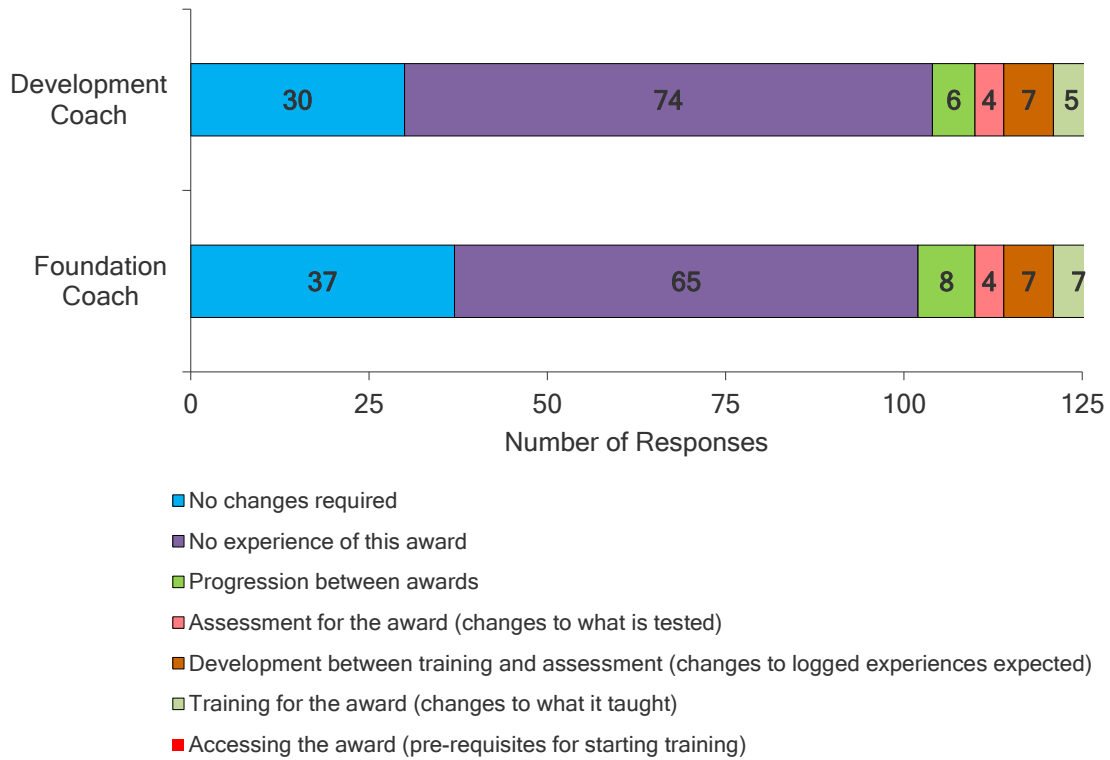
O14. If you selected "Training for the award (changes to what is taught)" or "Progression between awards". In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) highlight which specific aspects you feel need consideration. (*n* = 10)

Themes that emerged from the responses focused in part on an expansion of role (inclusive of supervision and bouldering at development coach level) but, significantly, the coaching content of both awards was considered to be too low and outdated. An increased personal performance requirement emerged as a subtheme but the focus remained on the role and function as a coach.

O15. Reflecting on changes you would like to see to the following awards, where do you feel these should be made? Data are expressed as a percentage of the total response count ($n = 117$)

Award	Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)	Training for the award (changes to what it taught)	Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)	Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)	Progression between awards	No experience of this award	No changes required
Climbing Wall award	8	7	6	8	9	19	55
Abseiling endorsement to the Climbing Wall award	5	3	3	2	5	31	53
Climbing Wall Leading Award	6	2	3	3	7	32	49
Single Pitch Award	13	19	19	19	15	3	44
Mountaineering Instructors Award	9	11	9	10	14	23	45
Mountaineering Instructors Certificate	0	3	4	3	4	41	47

O16. If you selected "Training for the award (changes to what it taught)" or "Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)", in a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) highlight which specific aspects you feel need consideration. ($n = 51$)

Responses to this question identified five major themes;

Accessibility (11 higher-order themes)

Cost emerges as a barrier to accessing the awards, particularly for the voluntary organisations. Other factors included course availability (numerically and geographically) and greater use of on-line training and assessment.

Assessment (16 higher-order themes)

The use of 'real' groups for assessment to increase relevance was the strongest theme. A clear use of, and adherence to, the pre-requisites emerges as a secondary issue.

Consistency (13 higher-order themes)

Themes of consistency in Single Pitch Awards emerged, related to both content of training and assessment. To a lesser extent, these concerns were also apparent in the CWA, CWLA and MIA.

Consolidation (5 higher-order themes)

The need for support in the period between training and assessment for all candidates was highlighted.

Quality (17 higher-order themes)

A closer alignment between real world practice and the training and assessment process emerged in relation to the Single Pitch Award and the Mountaineering Instructors Award. The extent and nature of candidates' experience emerges as a factor that influenced training. Finally, the style of training delivery and assessment needs to reflect modern teaching and learning approaches.

017. In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) highlight what AWARD COVERAGE (extra awards and/or specialisms) you would like Mountain Training to provide. If none, please say so. ($n = 98$)

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. A non-mountain based multi-pitch award also received support.

A better reflection of the range of environments in which a climbing instructor may work emerged, with a focus on water/rock margins. This included tidal cliffs and coasteering but was predominately focussed on gorge environments.

Sport climbing emerged as a factor, although its' status as an 'indoor' or 'outdoor' activity was unclear. It was closely linked to bouldering in many comments.

O18. In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) highlight what CONTENT CHANGES (changes to course content) you would like from Mountain Training. If none, please say so. (*n* = 93)

Teaching and Coaching skills (8 Higher-order themes)

Changes in content to reflect the teaching role of instructors, coaches etc. A move from personal performance to professional (note small 'p') practices was suggested.
"Too many technically able but inarticulate grunts around"

Content and Remit Clarity (17 higher-order themes)

Themes illustrated a lack of clarity in the remit and content of awards. This theme may be adequately described as a consistent feature or 'background noise' within the organisations' survey.

O19. In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) highlight what CHANGES IN APPROACH (changes in the ways instructor courses/assessments are conducted) you would like Mountain Training to provide. If none, please say so. (*n* = 94)

Promotion to Public (9 higher-order themes)

Greater understanding of the awards, their remit and functions was a clear theme. In particular, this related to the need for a greater public understanding of the scheme via the titles of the awards. Respondents felt that these should reflect the award holders' role, function and environment of work in a lay-persons' language.

"the SPA name is in a private language"

O20. In a final comment (up to 5,000 characters including spaces) highlight the key challenges to be addressed by this review? (*n* = 62)

Many of the responses to this question reflected the themes apparent in earlier questions. In addition to those highlighted above, a general feeling of critical satisfaction with the awards emerged; many were supportive of the overall scheme despite some constructive critique. A theme of 'confusion with the current system' also emerged, however, which appeared to contradict this point. For respondents, this reflected the proliferation of performance awards and a perceived growth in the number of governing bodies associated with them. This complexity could also be considered a pervading theme throughout the survey.

Individual Survey

CLIMBING AWARD(S) STRUCTURE, TITLE, CONTENT AND REMIT

I1. How satisfied are you with the current climbing awards? (*n* = 1,073)
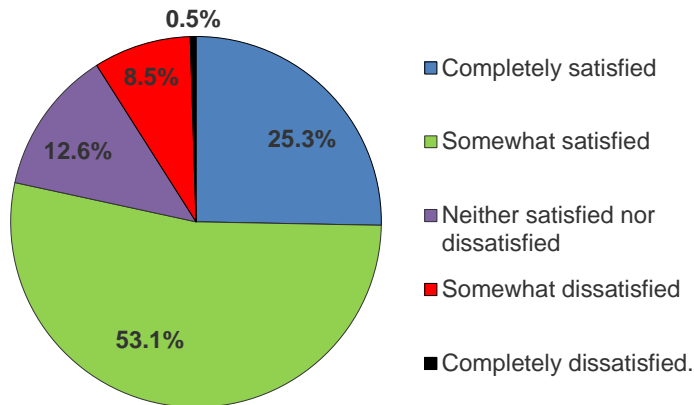
The current climbing awards require: (Tick all that apply) (*n* = 1,073)
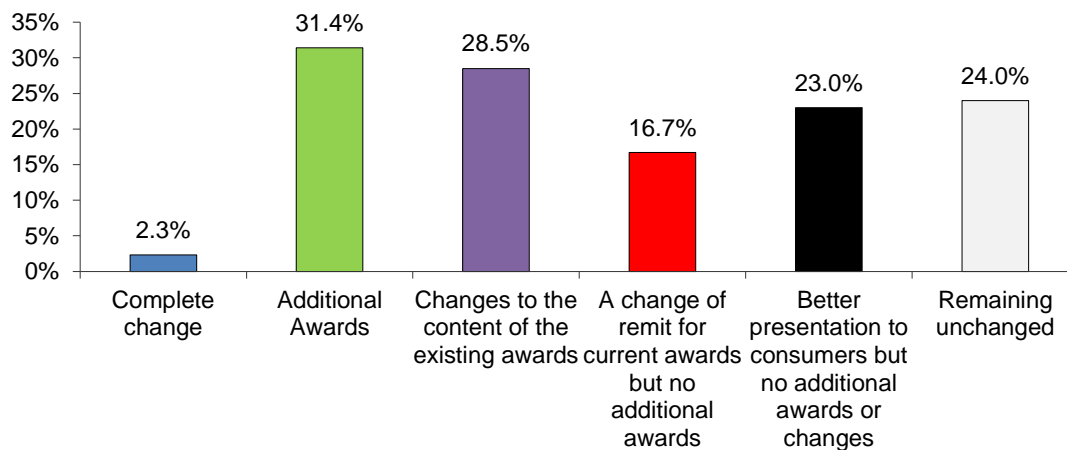
In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) please expand on your choice(s). What are the key changes needed, if any? (*n* = 1,073)

Two themes emerged as significant;

Additional Awards

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) and a need for a non-mountain based multi-pitch instructors award. Although these comments must be viewed in the context of a significant resistance to change or over complexity.

Development of Teaching Skills

A need for parity of teaching skill across awards. This related to teaching skills and an updating of these skills to reflect modern coaching and instructional practice. Implicit within this was a recognition that the instructor role is not a reflection of personal climbing skill and requires a distinct set of teaching skills.

I2. We are interested in understanding the breadth of how the awards are used. Please indicate which awards you think cover the supervision and teaching of each activity listed below. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total response count ($n = 1,016$)

Activity	Climbing Coaching Awards	Climbing Wall Awards	Single Pitch Award	Mountaineering Instructor Awards	Endorsement by another body	Need for a new Mountain Training award to cover this situation	I do not know
Supervising an abseil from a viaduct	1	12	70	53	13	5	9
Teaching lead climbing on a single pitch crag	4	1	26	79	5	15	3
Teaching climbing on a single pitch sea cliff accessed by abseil	3	1	19	82	5	9	4
Supervising a top-roping activity at a local crag	2	3	96	36	6	1	2
Teaching a climber who aspires to be	80	26	26	28	6	5	5

bouldering at a high level							
Teaching at a road side, non-mountain multi pitch venue	4	2	16	81	5	11	4
Teaching lead climbing on a local, bolted quarry	5	6	23	75	5	18	4

I3. Reflecting on possible changes, where do you feel these should be made? (*n* = 884)
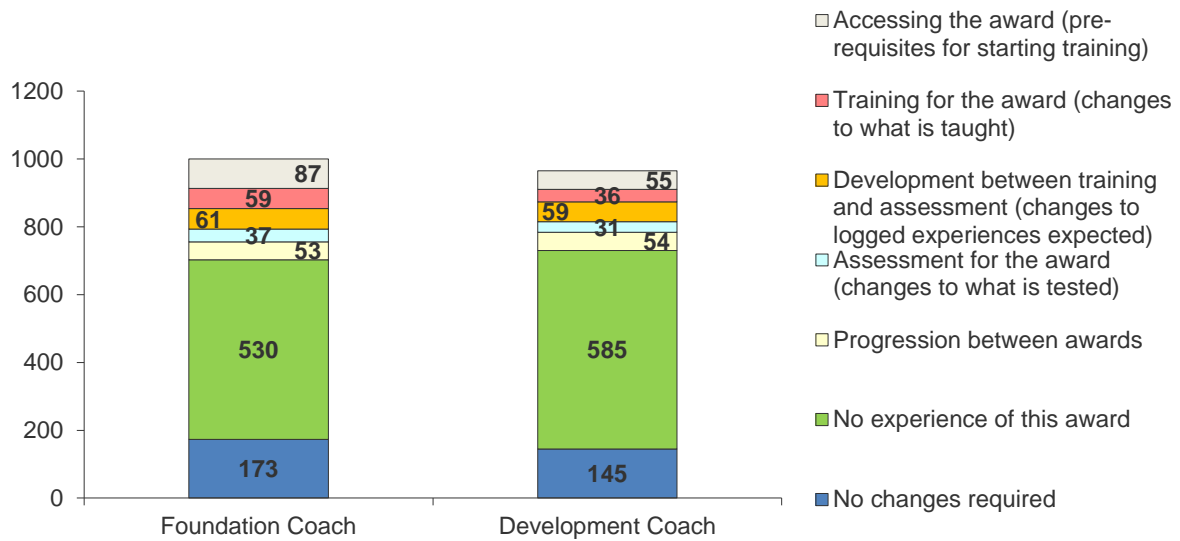
Legend:
- ☐ Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)
- ■ Training for the award (changes to what is taught)
- ■ Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)
- ☐ Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)
- ☐ Progression between awards
- ■ No experience of this award
- ■ No changes required

Foundation Coach:
- 87
- 59
- 61
- 37
- 53
- 530
- 173

Development Coach:
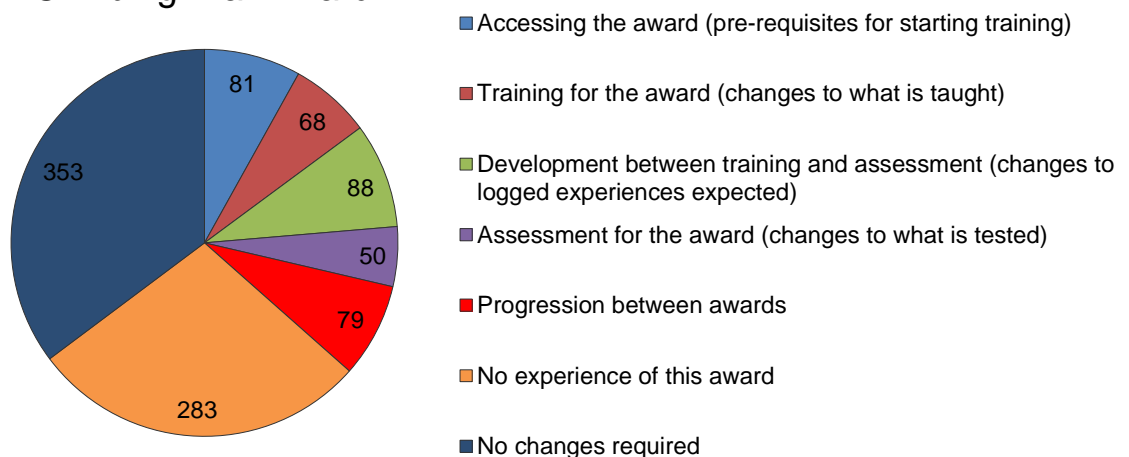- 55
- 36
- 59
- 31
- 54
- 585
- 145

In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) highlight which specific aspects you feel need consideration, if any. (*n* = 315)

The key theme that emerged related to the Foundation and Development Coach awards. This reflected a need for **updating** and **developing** of the coaching theory and skills content. The relationship to other climbing awards was also highlighted and emerged in responses to other questions.

I4. Please provide the same evaluation for the following awards. (*n* = 884)

Climbing Wall Award

Pie chart values:
- 81
- 68
- 88
- 50
- 79
- 283
- 353

Legend:
- ■ Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)
- ■ Training for the award (changes to what is taught)
- ■ Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)
- ■ Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)
- ■ Progression between awards
- ■ No experience of this award
- ■ No changes required

Climbing Wall Leading Award

Color	Legend
■	Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)
■	Training for the award (changes to what is taught)
■	Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)
■	Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)
■	Progression between awards
■	No experience of this award
■	No changes required

Values: 76, 46, 65, 41, 60, 367, 308

Climbing Wall Abseil Award

Color	Legend
■	Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)
■	Training for the award (changes to what is taught)
■	Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)
■	Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)
■	Progression between awards
■	No experience of this award
■	No changes required

Values: 44, 44, 58, 29, 50, 388, 331

Single Pitch Award

Color	Legend
■	Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)
■	Training for the award (changes to what is taught)
■	Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)
■	Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)
■	Progression between awards
■	No experience of this award
■	No changes required

Values: 112, 148, 132, 109, 179, 127, 320

Mountaineering Instructors Award

- Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)
- Training for the award (changes to what is taught)
- Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)
- Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)
- Progression between awards
- No experience of this award
- No changes required

Mountaineering Instructors Certificate

- Accessing the award (pre-requisites for starting training)
- Training for the award (changes to what is taught)
- Development between training and assessment (changes to logged experiences expected)
- Assessment for the award (changes to what is tested)
- Progression between awards
- No experience of this award
- No changes required

In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) highlight which specific aspects of the award you feel need consideration, if any. (*n* = 516)

Two themes emerged as significant,

No Change

A clear desire not to change the awards was balanced by respondents who highlighted a need to change.

A Need to Change

Those who sought change identified this as being required around the single pitch award, the teaching of lead climbing (multi and single pitch) and a need for a non-mountain based, multi-pitch instructors' award.

PARTICIPANTS' QUALIFICATION, WORK AND EMPLOYERS

I5. Please indicate your current level of training and/or award. (*n* = 845).

84 of these responses indicated "I do not hold a Mountain Training Award".
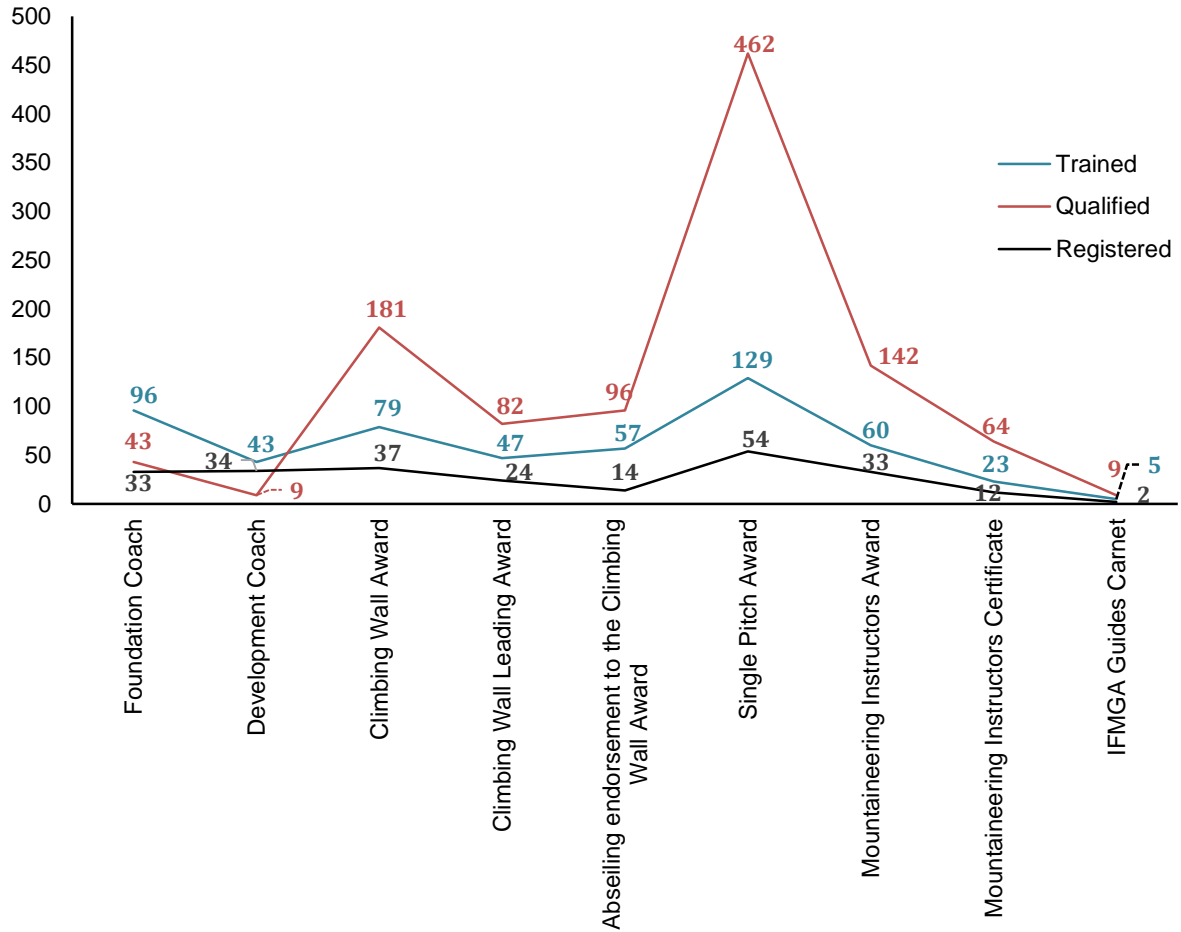
I6. Please indicate how many years have passed since you achieved the qualification. (*n* = 680)

Qualification	Years Qualified													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+
Foundation Coach	34	14	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Development Coach	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Climbing Wall Award	42	40	36	17	19	11	11	4	1	-	2	2	-	-
Climbing Wall Leading Award	20	18	17	9	15	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Abseiling endorsement to the Climbing Wall Award	17	20	19	6	8	6	5	4	1	1	1	1		
Single Pitch Award	44	37	34	27	31	28	16	25	11	35	85	77	45	4
Mountaineering Instructors Award	8	8	8	8	11	14	7	5	5	12	28	25	12	3
Mountaineering Instructors Certificate	10	1	1	7	4	3	3	4	2	1	10	9	9	7
IFMGA Guides Carnet	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	3

NB. Responses highlighted in red could be considered as spurious.

I7. If you hold another 'titled' climbing award from your organisation please detail below. (e.g., Northern Irish Multi-pitch climbing award, Southern Sandstone Supervisors award) (*n* = 98)

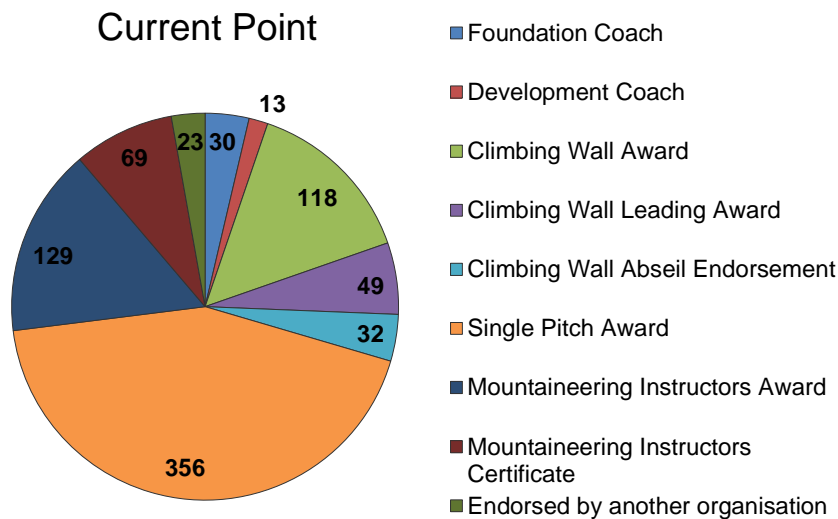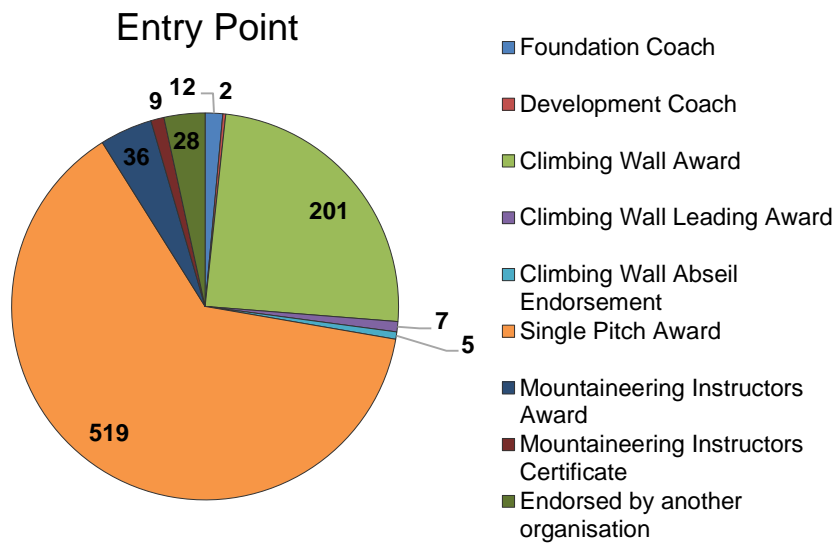| Issuing Authority	Number of Awards Identified
Voluntary Organisation (e.g. Scouts, Girls Guides)	11
Military (e.g., Joints services Awards	44
Local authority	13
Other (e.g., IRATA, ERCA)	4
Foreign Climbing awards (e.g. Moniteur d'escalade)	11

Table 1 by Issuing authority (*n* = 83)

Environment	Number of Awards Identified
Climbing Wall (inc. abseil)	11
Single Pitch Crags	16
Multi-pitch rock climbing	38
Mountaineering (including winter)	13
Other (inc. coastal)	3

Table 2 by environment (*n* = 81)

I8. In addition to any of your formal Mountain Training awards, are you endorsed by another organisation to teach at, or to do, any of the following? (*n* = 568)
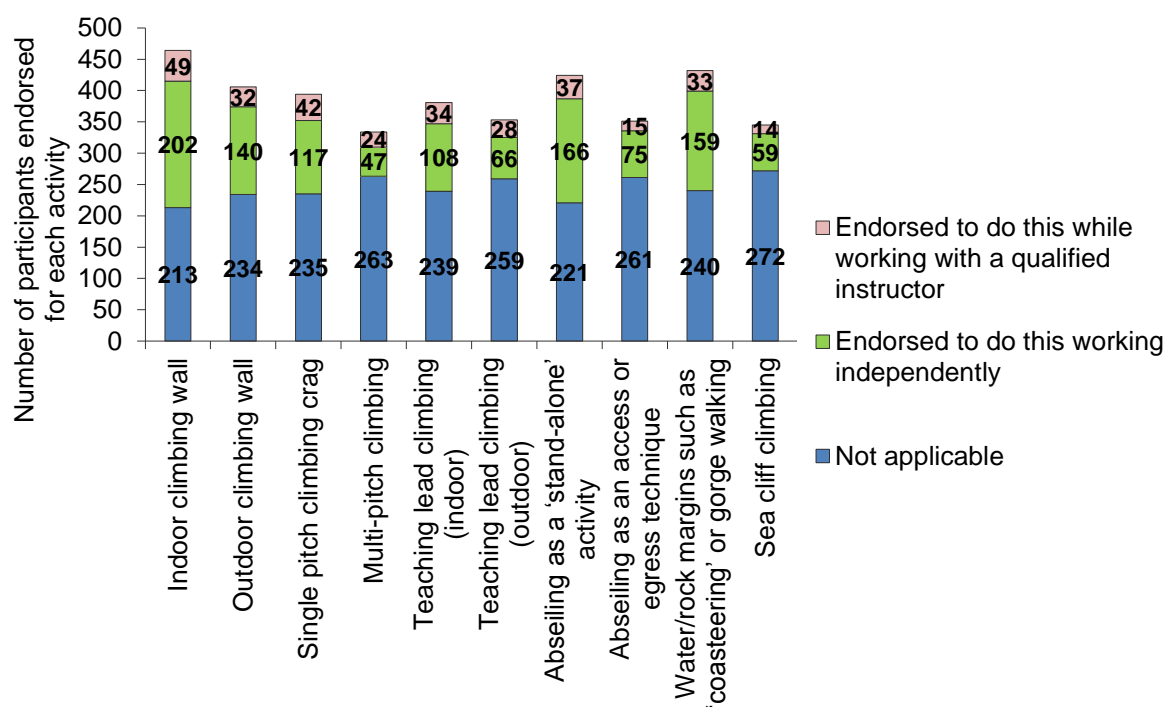
I9. "Your Personal Development Pathway as an Instructor". Please identify your entry point to the scheme (first award taken) and your proposed/actual exit point (final award taken/planned). (*n* = 819)

Entry Point

- Foundation Coach
- Development Coach
- Climbing Wall Award
- Climbing Wall Leading Award
- Climbing Wall Abseil Endorsement
- Single Pitch Award
- Mountaineering Instructors Award
- Mountaineering Instructors Certificate
- Endorsed by another organisation

Current Point

- Foundation Coach
- Development Coach
- Climbing Wall Award
- Climbing Wall Leading Award
- Climbing Wall Abseil Endorsement
- Single Pitch Award
- Mountaineering Instructors Award
- Mountaineering Instructors Certificate
- Endorsed by another organisation

Exit Point

- Foundation Coach
- Development Coach
- Climbing Wall Award
- Climbing Wall Leading Award
- Climbing Wall Abseil Endorsement
- Single Pitch Award
- Mountaineering Instructors Award
- Mountaineering Instructors Certificate
- Endorsed by another organisation

In a 'tweet' (140 characters including spaces) please tell us about any difficulties encountered in your development as a climbing instructor. (*n* = 509)
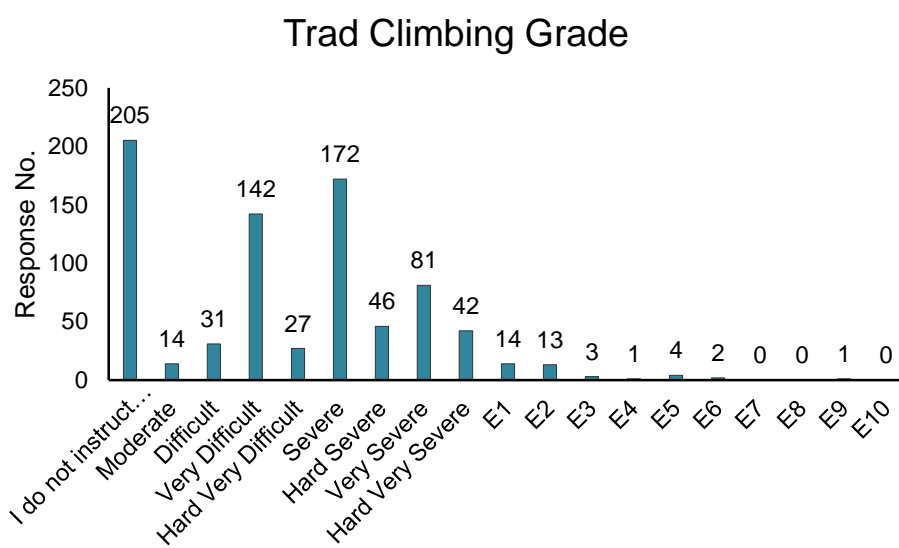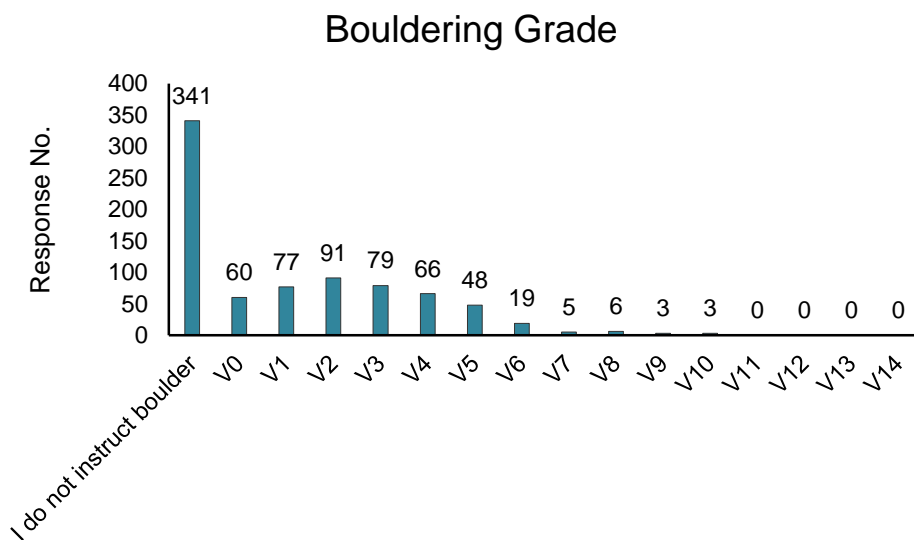
'Time' emerges as the most significant difficulty encountered, time for training and time to gain the experience required.

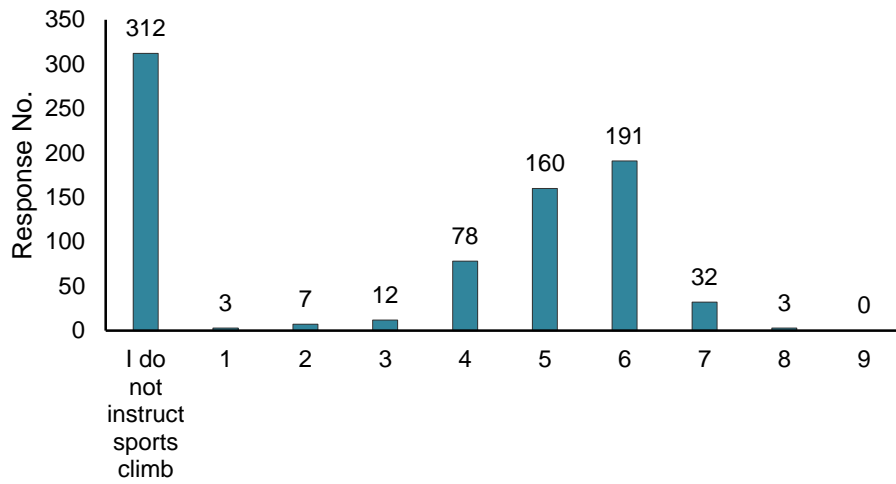I10. For my role as a climbing instructor I need to be able to climb. (*n* = 798)

Yes = 91%, No = 9%

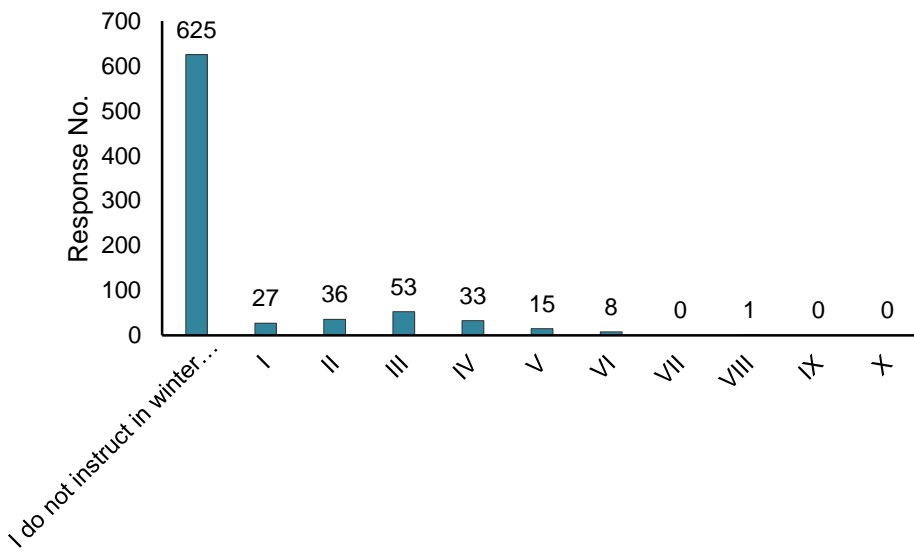Clearly the respondents felt being able to climb was important for the instructor.

I11. We are interested in knowing the type of terrain and route difficulty which most of your climbing instruction occurs: Please select from the following terrains? (*n* = 798)
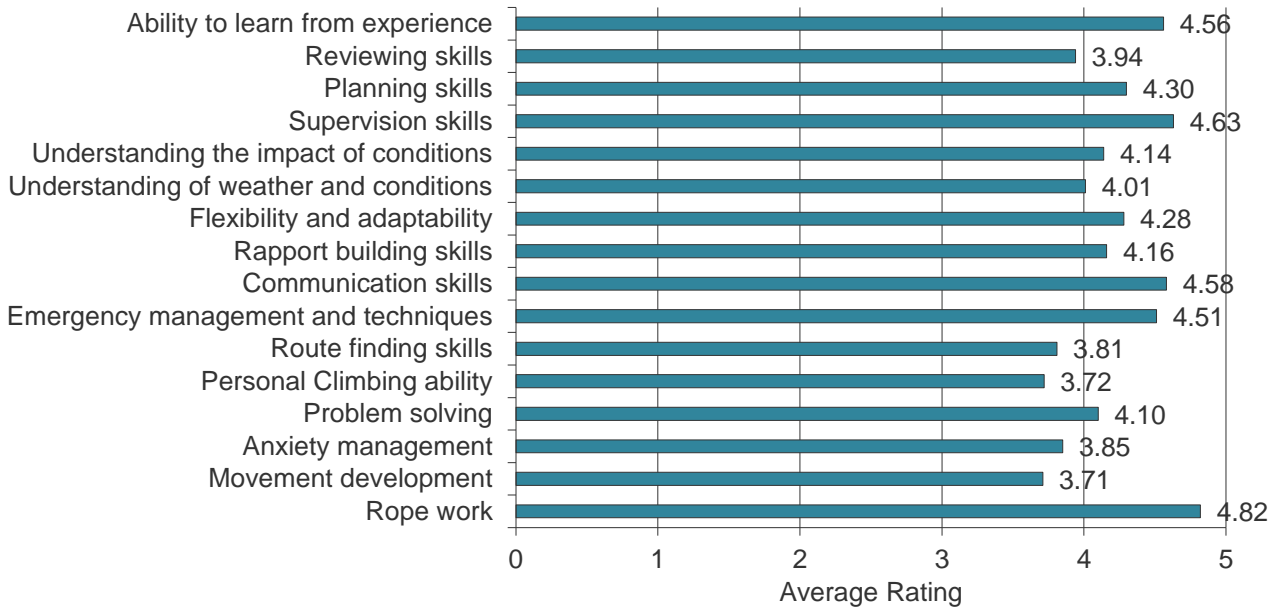
Bouldering Grade

Trad Climbing Grade

Sport Grade

Response No.

Category	Value
I do not instruct sports climb	312
1	3
2	7
3	12
4	78
5	160
6	191
7	32
8	3
9	0

Winter Climbing Grade

Response No.

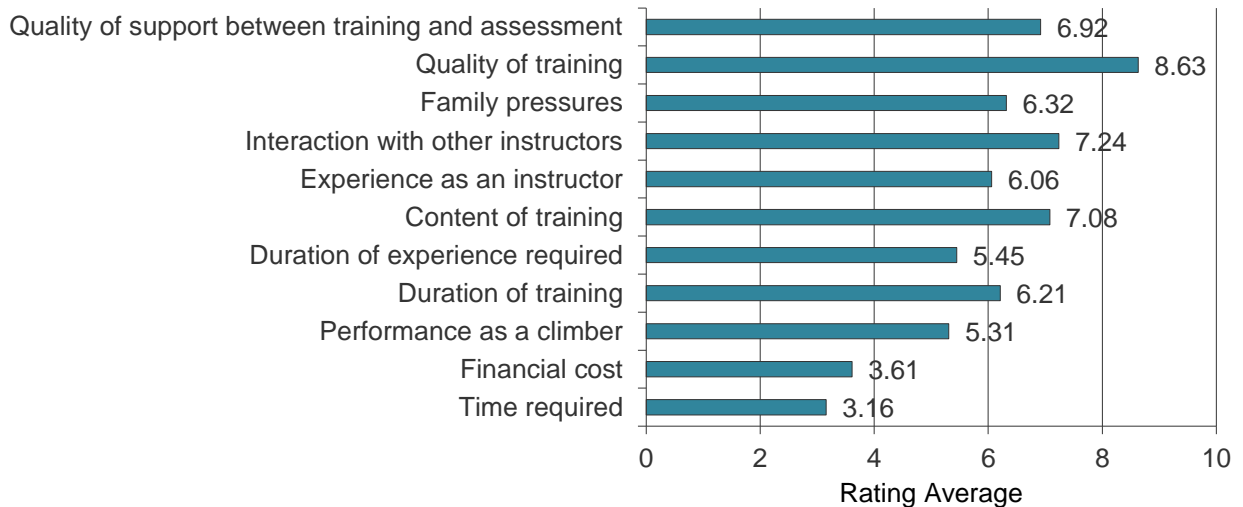| Category	Value
I do not instruct in winter…	625
I	27
II	36
III	53
IV	33
V	15
VI	8
VII	0
VIII	1
IX	0
X	0

PARTICIPANTS' ROLE AND PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMBING TUITION

I12. Please rate the following skills with regards to importance in your practice as a climbing instructor. 1 being nice to have, 3 being valuable and 5 being essential. ($n = 786$)

Skill	Average Rating
Ability to learn from experience	4.56
Reviewing skills	3.94
Planning skills	4.30
Supervision skills	4.63
Understanding the impact of conditions	4.14
Understanding of weather and conditions	4.01
Flexibility and adaptability	4.28
Rapport building skills	4.16
Communication skills	4.58
Emergency management and techniques	4.51
Route finding skills	3.81
Personal Climbing ability	3.72
Problem solving	4.10
Anxiety management	3.85
Movement development	3.71
Rope work	4.82

I13. Create a list of the top 5 factors (with 1 being the highest) that had a negative impact on your progression as a climbing instructor. ($n = 660$)

Factor	Rating Average
Quality of support between training and assessment	6.92
Quality of training	8.63
Family pressures	6.32
Interaction with other instructors	7.24
Experience as an instructor	6.06
Content of training	7.08
Duration of experience required	5.45
Duration of training	6.21
Performance as a climber	5.31
Financial cost	3.61
Time required	3.16

Other (please specify). ($n = 185$)

The 'other' identified factors generated four high order themes that had a negative impact on an instructor's development; award factors, lack of interaction, external factors and personal factors. Importantly, a significant proportion reported 'no negative factors'

Award Factors

These included: accessibility, assessment, current award itself, lack of awards, preparation pressure and quality of instructors
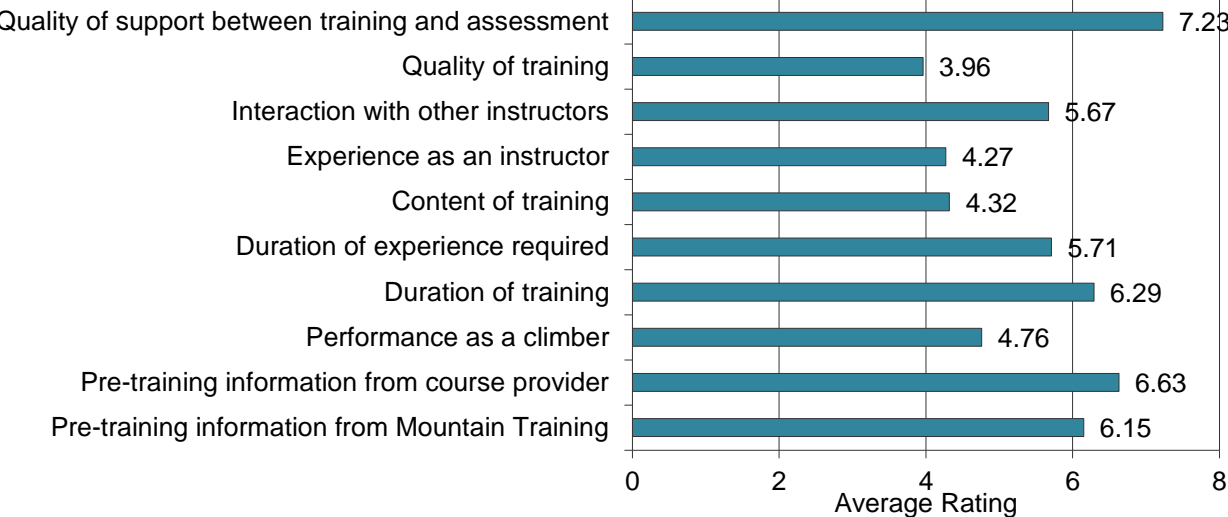
Community of Practice

These included: finding climbing partners, finding a job and access to facilities and clubs

Personal Factors

These included: location, confidence, injury, loss of enjoyment and work life balance

I14. What had the greatest impact on your success? ($n = 483$)

Factor	Average Rating
Quality of support between training and assessment	7.23
Quality of training	3.96
Interaction with other instructors	5.67
Experience as an instructor	4.27
Content of training	4.32
Duration of experience required	5.71
Duration of training	6.29
Performance as a climber	4.76
Pre-training information from course provider	6.63
Pre-training information from Mountain Training	6.15

Other (please specify). ($n = 185$)

Two factors emerge as have a positive impact on the instructors' development;

Experience

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.

Personal factors

Determination, focus, tenacity, planning, transferability, learning from experiences and resilience are all factors that were identified as significant in success.

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE
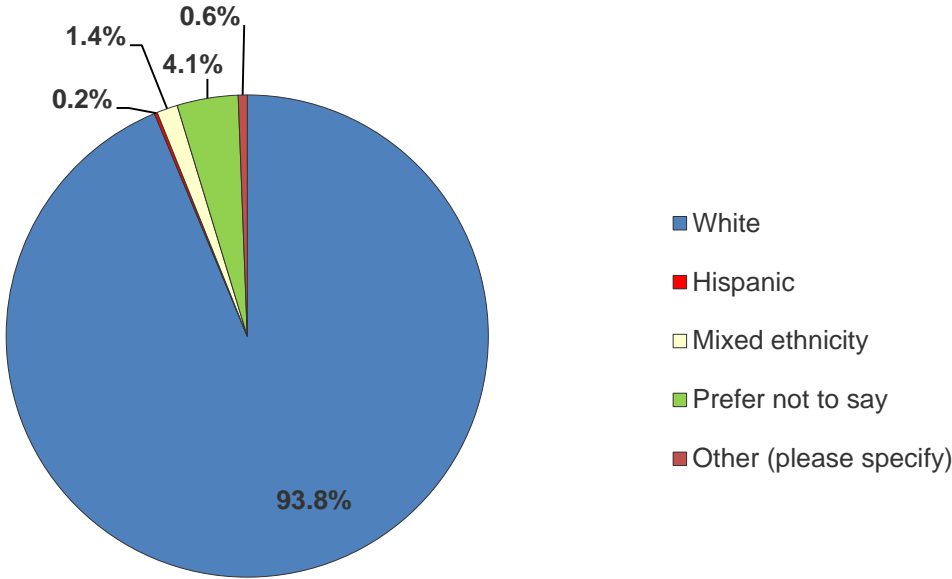
What is your age? (*n* = 660)
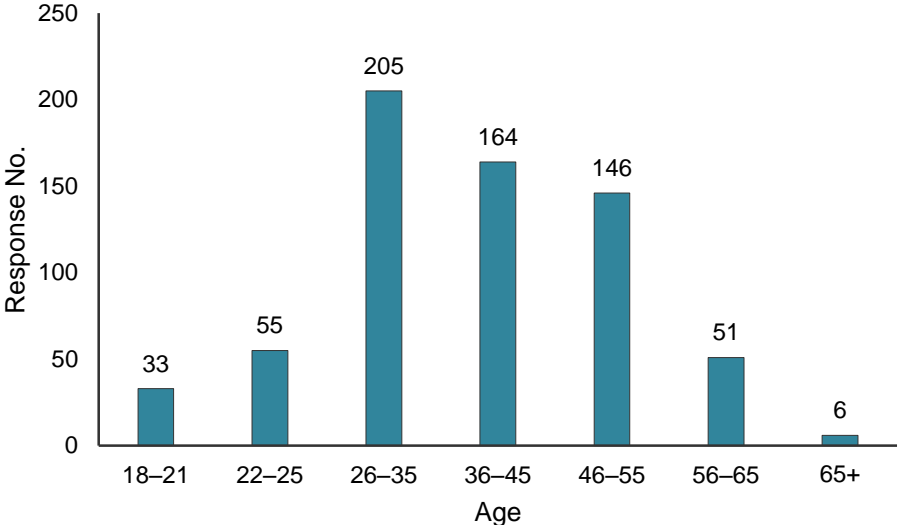
I15. What is your gender identity? (*n* = 660)

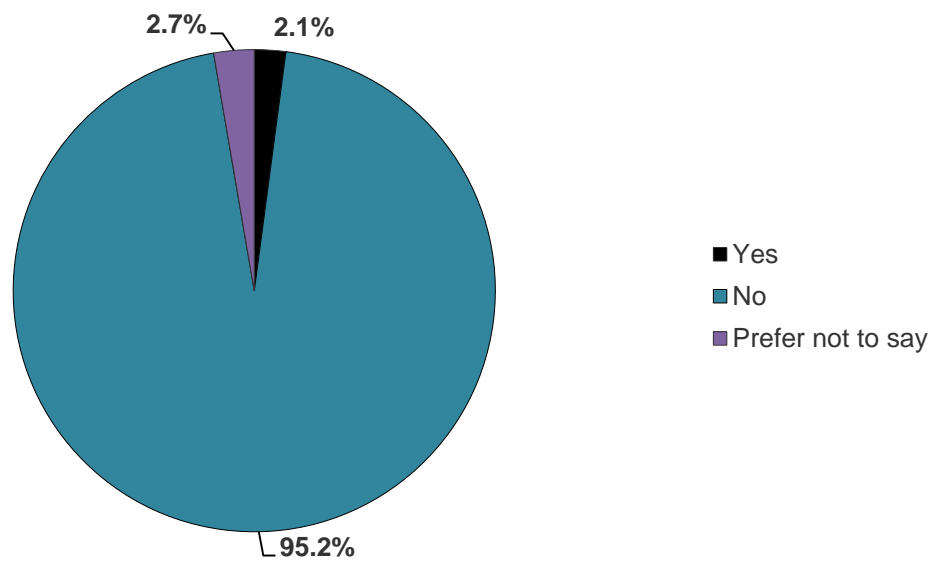Male = 79.5%, Female = 18.5%, Prefer not to say = 2%

I16. Do you consider yourself to be: (*n* = 660)

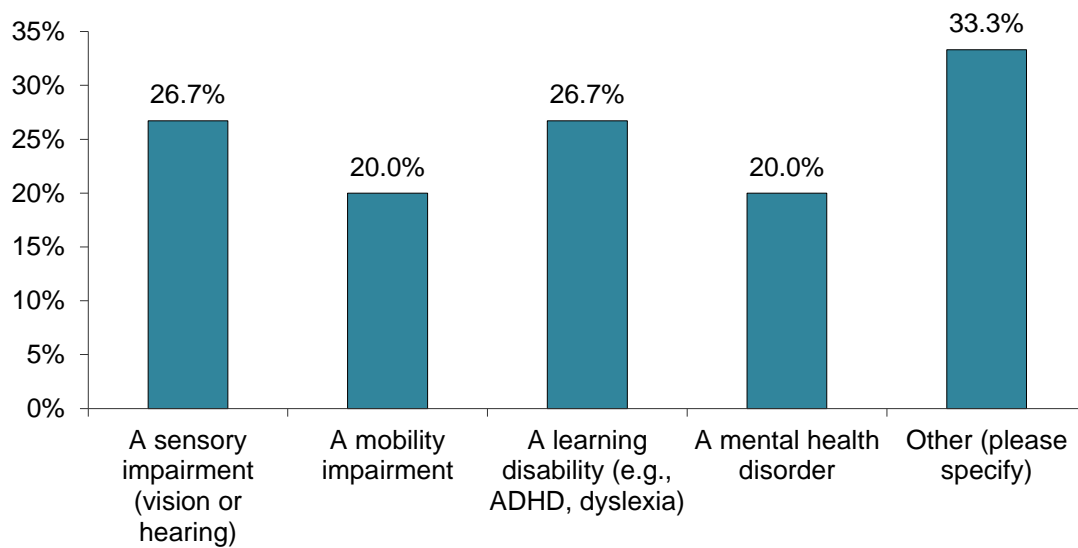Heterosexual/straight = 91.5%, Gay or lesbian = 1.7%, Bisexual = 0.6%, Prefer not to say = 6.2%

Ethnicity (or race). Please specify. (*n* = 660)

I17. Do you consider yourself to be disabled? ($n = 660$)

Pie chart:
- Yes: 2.1%
- Prefer not to say: 2.7%
- No: 95.2%

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following have been diagnosed? ($n = 15$)

Bar chart:
- A sensory impairment (vision or hearing): 26.7%
- A mobility impairment: 20.0%
- A learning disability (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia): 26.7%
- A mental health disorder: 20.0%
- Other (please specify): 33.3%

I18. Where do you live? (*n* = 657)

Percentage of respondents by Mountain Training region.
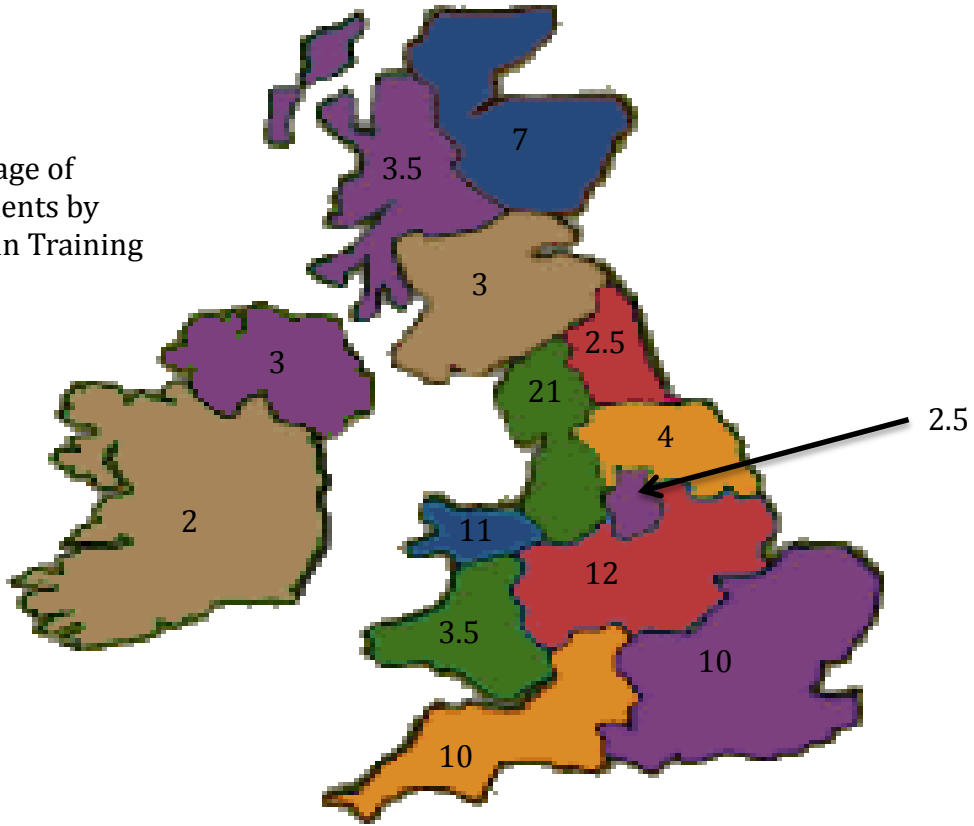
Part 2: Responses to your questions – What did you want to know?

The brief raised thirty-one different questions. These have been answered by drawing on responses both within and across the surveys. This approach has allowed us to cross-reference and triangulate answers to your questions, ensuring both quality and depth to the answers below. We have chosen to conclude with the attitudinal questions on the basis that the preceding questions provide a context and, we believe, assist in clarifying our interpretation of attitudes held by the respondents.

1. Are there any obvious changes that should be made to the awards?

Yes. Splitting the SPA and CWA will cater for the suggested assistant and instructional awards. In addition, changes should be considered to the multi-pitch climbing award since instructors did not view the role as being dependant on mountaineer skills.

2. Are there any obvious gaps in the award structure that need to be filled?

Yes. Gaps in award provision relate to the teaching of lead climbing in a non-mountain context and the required assistant role highlighted earlier.

3. Why does that gap exist?

From the questionnaire alone the reasons for the gap are unclear. However, when considered in the wider context (i.e., the evolution of awards, changes in climbing culture etc.), we believe that these gaps are a result of the evolution of awards and the experiences of the decision makers in the development of the awards. This is reflected across the award scheme, structure, delivery and assessment. Specifically, a lack of alignment underpins the challenges in implementing any changes to the award scheme.

4. What kind of award they would like to be seen filling it?

An instructors award that has no link to the mountain walking awards (multi-pitch and lead climbing.) as well as assistant awards that have no climbing requirement.

5. Is there a requirement for teaching leading on rock other than at MIA?

Yes. See above.

6. Is there a requirement for a top-roping only award?

Yes. At an assistant level below the CWA and SPA. This 'frees up' the CWA and SPA to be enhanced as stand-alone instructional awards, a split of the current awards. A single assistant award that addressed the needs of both indoor and outdoor environments may retain the simplicity of the current scheme.

7. How does the balance of content (i.e., technical, soft skills and coaching) need to change in the awards?

Survey data shows a greater recognition of the instructional role as an emergent theme. Specifically, this differentiates the role from leader, guide and, potentially, supervisor. Additionally, this reflects a demand to increase the teaching elements of the instructional awards; that is, an updating within the awards and also in the training and assessment of the awards.

8. What are the frustrations/blocks/barriers within awards, especially amongst candidates who drop out or who are interested, but do not proceed?

Barriers could be identified within four key areas; (1) inconsistency in delivery and assessment; (2) lack of access to courses either for geographical, time or financial reasons; (3) lack of access to communities of practice and; (4) personal factors such as tenacity, determination and interests outside of climbing.

9. What is the place of sport-climbing in the outdoor awards?

Few responses considered sports climbing solely. However, sports climbing emerged as a theme within the Climbing Wall Awards. Our interpretation is that sport climbing takes place in controlled, managed and regulated environments such as climbing walls, bolted routes and competitions. Climbing as a sport in this sense takes place using manufactured protection both indoors and outdoors. This would align sport climbing more closely with the climbing wall awards in terms of the technical and cognitive skills required. The responses would not suggest a need for a 'stand-alone' set of awards.

10. What grades do. . .

Respondents of the individual survey recognised value in being a 'climber' within an instructional role (91% in support). Contrastingly, however, qualitative data suggest that an assistant role may not

require similar climbing ability. As such, the instructional role and personal performance appear to conflate, perhaps illustrating a lack of clarity in the mental model by both the instructors and scheme.

Most bouldering teaching occurs on problems around the V2 grade.
Most traditional climbing takes place on Difficult, Very Difficult, Severe and Hard Severe, climbs.
Most Sports Climbing instruction takes place on grade 5–6 routes.
Most Winter Climbing instruction on Grade 3 routes.

Notably, results showed a rapid drop off in performance level after these grades. This may suggest, therefore, that instructors are working within their assessed remit.

10.1. . . Volunteer users work at?

Voluntary organisations use 'instructors' with a wide range of qualifications. Most of the 'instructors' working in voluntary organisations hold the Single Pitch Awards (Severe routes and below) and have also trained at Foundation Coach level. Within these organisations there was also a high number of unqualified staff being deployed, suggesting that the scheme has a gap for the voluntary organisations; this is supported by the qualitative data.

10.2. . . Professional users work at?

Non-voluntary organisations also use 'instructors' with a full range of qualification. Two clusters of award holders reflect the breadth of non-voluntary activity (Climbing wall organisations using the wall awards, OE centres and activity providers using a broader range with a peak in SPA). This would suggest that the non-voluntary organisations are working on single and multi-pitch venues between Severe and Very Severe standard. Clearly, more specialised delivery occurs with some instructors capable of, and operating on, harder routes. Although, the grades highlighted reflect the 'default' role and performance of the MIA.

11. What needs to stay the same?

Many aspect of the awards clearly work. Some areas of technical content should stay the same but may be distributed between a broader range of awards; that is, the modularisation of awards. A clearer mental model will enable content to be identified for particular awards based on its alignment with Mountains Training's philosophy for provision.

12. Are any changes desirable in terms of inclusion; gender, social, physical ability etc.?

Yes. However response rates for disability and sexual orientation prevent comments in those specific areas. These low response rates may illustrate a problem in terms of inclusion or attraction of climbing toward these groups. Training to address inclusivity was requested in the survey. The position of Mountain Training towards inclusivity would need to be expressed and used to underpin development in this area, although may be addressed implicitly by addressing other points raised in the survey; notably adaptability and flexibility.

Female respondents identified a range of frustrations and barriers to development that corresponded to the overall finding. However, a clear theme linked to the attitude of instructors and participants towards female trainees was a disturbing factor. Importantly, sexist behaviour appears not to be challenged in training courses. Linked closely to this would be a lack of strong female role models in practice and a female 'voice' in the decision making aspects of Mountain Training.

13. Does volume [experiences, routes, days etc.] need to change? . . .

Experience is valued by those with experience; in particular, experience alongside other instructors. However, gaining such experiences presents many challenges to up and coming instructors. Maximising experience to facilitate development may provide a solution and reflect the request to update training content.

13.1. . . pre-registration?

Pre-registration experience is valued by those who have experience but not by those who self-classify as inexperienced. Equally, experience and integration with a community of practitioners (CoP) are the two significant positive factors in an instructor's development. Related to this would be the accrediting of prior learning (APL), accrediting of other qualifications (esp. Military) and accrediting of experiential learning.

13.2. . . pre-assessment?

Structured experience is valued between training and assessment that will frequently involve engagement with a CoP. A capacity for experienced instructors to act as a 'mentor' for a route in this regard was perceived as beneficial.

14. Is it a good structure?

In parts. The structure has many good aspects that are recognised by the respondents. However, the structure does not address the full breadth of uses for the awards which leads to the use of

endorsements to fill gaps (these gaps are highlighted in earlier responses). A modularised approach has been proposed and could be considered alongside the structured courses delivery.

15. Does it [the awards scheme] make sense in terms of the activities covered?

No.

16. Does it [the awards scheme] make sense in terms of the progression between the different awards?

No. The assumption of a linear progression throughout the scheme does not allow the diverse nature of modern climbing to be accommodated.

Attitudes towards the awards and awards scheme;

We have utilised the Affective, Behaviour and Cognitive (ABC) model (Vealy, 2001) to interpret the responses to the surveys in an attempt to understand the attitudes towards the scheme and awards. This means that we have considered attitudes towards the emotions (affect) of the respondents, the behaviours of the respondents in relation to the awards and their understanding of the award (cognition).

The respondents have strong feelings towards the awards, varying from complete satisfaction to dissatisfaction. However, most recognise and accept a need for adaptation of the current scheme. The completion rate for female respondents is very high and may suggest that females felt more strongly about the issues raised within the survey. Indications about attitudes towards change suggest that the management of change within the scheme will require careful consideration. It should also be noted that feelings are strong regarding the extent of and need for any change. In brief, there is desire for a more simple and concise scheme. Reflecting such attitudes, the award titles are considered to be inaccurate and confusing. This confusion extends to the governance of the awards and their remit, thus presenting many challenges for the deployers and instructors. Finally, communication about the awards is felt to be unclear and confusing to the public who seek out coaching.

Behaviours towards and perception of the awards frequently reflect the circumstances, including location, role and environment, of the respondent. Such variety of perceptions reflect the different individual philosophies (i.e., how they view climbing) and the philosophy of the scheme, which is perceived to be driven by a male "mountain old guard" (response from individual survey). Respondent behaviour is inconsistent because the scheme's philosophy is unclear and subject to interpretation by individuals, training providers, assessors etc. Consequently, the use of endorsements

to supplement deployment possibilities and to allow a broader range of practice is highlighted. This is exacerbated by the confusion around remit and results in a default to MIA for anything complex or requiring adaptability and flexibility.

An underlying frustration with and confusion regarding the awards exists that may explain the desire for a simple and concise solution mentioned earlier. This is perhaps unsurprising and reflects the different backgrounds of respondents and evolution of the scheme. This appears to result in respondents 'jumping through hoops' on assessment, either because of a perception of the 'Mountain Training way' or as a result of disconnect between the assessment and the eventual role of a qualified instructor. Clearly the awards are used to underpin practice but may not be viewed as representative of the actual role.

The awards' pathways are perceived to be somewhat disjointed and biased towards those with mountaineering experience. Consequently, the awards are perceived not to integrate fully with modern climbing or teaching practice. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the syllabi are perceived to require some amendment. Attitudes towards remit vary because there is no clear agreement on remit, which stems from different mental models for the awards that appear geographically, philosophically and factionally driven. As a result, the awards are perceived to have limitations and to not address all areas of current practice.

Progression requirements are perceived to be both too stringent and not stringent enough, as reflected in respondents' perception of the awards' function. The CWA and SPA awards appear to sit in the middle between a clearly defined instructional role and a simpler assistant role.

Structure of delivery, the models and content incorporated in both training and assessment are equally perceived to be inconsistent with aspects being irrelevant to practice. This leads to perceived consistency in assessments and training courses that reflect different regional biases and opinions.

Part 3: Discussion

A remit for change

A 29% response rate, with a 65% completion rate for the Organisation Survey was, we felt, a good result. The 12.25% response rate, with 47% completion rate for the individual survey was only acceptable, however. The scheme is generally well accepted, with an agreement that change is required to reflect the changes in the way people become climbers. This would suggest that Mountain Training have a remit for change. However it is clear that this change would be best described as a restructure but **NOT** wholesale change. Adaptation, simplification, refinement, restructure and rationalisation are perhaps the kind of rhetoric to describe this part of the process, at least so far as the respondents are concerned.

Changes in Focus

Challenging the demands for simplification and refinement are the need to update delivery and broaden the range of provision. A strengthening instructor role, an aligned assistant role that is facilitated by development of the teaching skills in the instructional awards and a clear underpinning philosophy (i.e., what does an instructor 'look like'? how does a Mountain Training instructor behave?) has the potential to clearly create an instructors role. This places teaching skill alongside the technical skills for the instructor, providing a clear message that climbing instructors are instructors who climb rather than climbers who instruct (note that both versions climb!). This clear message may also address the confusion between personal climbing skill and professional climbing skill. In creating an instructional role, a space is generated for a lower level assistant role that would suit the demands for a lower level award with a very clearly defined 'assisting' remit and highly 'proceduralised' training.

Experience clearly underpins the judgement skills for the instructional awards. Currently this is achieved in a rather ad-hoc manner via the pre-requisite requirements. The quality of the learning outcomes from experience are impossible to judge until assessment. A change in focus to some aspects of training, registration and log book (a CPD log) could encourage experience to be reflected on, therefore maximising the impact of experience rather than just collecting it.

Specific changes

Specific challenges focus around the Single Pitch Award and are reflected in the "changes to focus" initial paragraph. An expansion of the instructor's capacity to teach lead climbing

would correspond with a development of the teaching skills required for such complex judgements and skills. (A single pitch instructor who can teach lead climbing – also see our suggestion in the climbing wall award suite of awards).

The teaching of and leading of multi-pitch routes should no longer be linked to the mountain leadership award. Climbers no longer develop just via the walking-scrambling-climbing tradition and now access climbing via climbing walls and single pitch progressions. Consequently, the route for instructors is somewhat redundant. A specific award, without the mountain link, could allow multi-pitch climbing to be led and instructed without the link to mountain skills, a development from the 'single pitch instructors' award (terminology however remains an issue). Notably, however, the nature of multiple pitch venues would require that key aspects of the Mountaineering Instructors Award remain within any multi-pitch training course or module (notably intermediate terrain to access and egress crags).

Contextual Challenges

The two schools of sport and 'trad' climbing place different demands on the instructors and also illustrate different motivations and philosophies for the climber. The focus of the sports award could be climbing performance, while the focus on the 'trad' awards on judgement and decision-making around placement of protection (i.e., adventure). Two parallel systems that have a shared comparable level of technical and teaching skill and contextual roles may add simplicity and also allow a single 'entry point' to the scheme.

Climbing Wall Awards and Sports Climbing

The climbing wall provides a highly managed, 'sportified' environment in which a set of rules and regulations would not be out of place; clearly, this differs from the 'trad' climbing environment. However, some of the specific challenges focused around the climbing wall award are shared with the single pitch award and possible solutions are reflected in the "changes in focus" initial paragraph (an assisting and instructing split). An expansion of the instructors' role to include and teach lead climbing would correspond with a development of the teaching skills required by the instructor. The judgments and techniques associated with the teaching of climbing (including lead climbing) differ on man-made protection (bolts and climbing wall fixtures) and this could be achieved in a highly proceduralised way. That may allow the climbing wall instructor to be taught a set of proceduralised approaches and assessed in a correspondingly competency-focused manner, reflecting the managed environment. This could reduce the teaching skill requirement for climbing wall 'instructors',

may be simpler and could allow easier training. From a negative perspective, however, such a 'downgrading' of coaching skills may prevent the possible transfer between sport and 'trad' that needs to be considered. The need for a sports climbing coach is not addressed currently, although the proposed performance coach could provide a basis for a coach with a clear completion/sport performance focus and could be accommodated as a final level in this suite of awards.

Consideration to the potential for transfer between 'trad' and sport also has to be acknowledged. The closer the compatibility of training between 'trad' and sport, the simpler any transfer may become. This transfer could be considered alongside an APL mechanism that allows for transfer of other awards (we address this idea later).

Mountain Awards

The mountain awards clearly need to retain a link with the mountain leadership awards. However, another approach (operating in tandem with the current approach) could allow the Mountaineering Instructors Awards training to be modularised, which includes different rock climbing and mountaineering modules. The rock climbing module could be accessible to non-mountain leader climbers and allow them access to a stand-alone multi-pitch climbing award. The mountain training module could be attended prior to an assessment for mountaineering instructors, the winter aspects remaining the same for full certification. Mountain leaders could also use the mountain module as a pre-requisite for mountain leader training delivery, addressing some CPD requirements.

Coaching awards

The current Foundation, Development and Performance Coaching Awards could provide the basis for three levels of teaching skill training. The existing awards could become modules within the system but need not necessarily be awards in themselves. Teaching skills could be assessed in context of the award via an expertise-focused assessment. An Assistant Award as a level 1 (an updated Foundation), Instructor Award as a level 2 (an updated Development) and a sports/rock climbing Coach (the Performance Coach, either performance (sport) or adventure (trad) based).

Changes in Structure

A simplified award structure consisting of fewer awards, but an increased diversity of routes through those awards, seems appealing and practical. However, it is not without its own

complications in terms of monitoring of the training, ensuring consistency in training and an increase in overall cost. Fewer awards accessed via a modularised route alongside the current delivery could provide such an option. A modularised approach will be most easily managed in the highly proceduralised aspects of the training and may be best suited to the lower levels and the managed environment of the climbing wall.

A natural manifestation of this could be a single entry award that enables an award holder to monitor belaying activities, rig climbs (on pre placed points; i.e., follow instruction from an instructor who places the gear), size and fit equipment. Such an award could be highly proceduralised and therefore delivery of training and assessment could be strictly regulated and competency based. The award could be supported by a 'registrant' status as a pre-emptive step (see recommendations).

Developing the coach education delivery.

Growing research evidence suggests that the approaches used in coaching to develop performance are not directly transferable into coach education (e.g., Jones, 2006). Accordingly, a Coach Education workforce would need to be trained prior to implementing the scheme. Simple provision of a new syllabus alone is unlikely to achieve the desired outcome, whilst an assumption of high-level qualification as a coach will be insufficient to ensure quality as an educator. Indeed, reflecting the 'strengthening' of the teaching aspect of the scheme, trainers may be developed and evaluated on the basis of educational skill rather than purely climbing skill. The nature of mountain training education will be driven via a coherent metal model of Mountain Training education.

Organisational Changes; What does a Mountain Training Instructor 'look' and behave like?

Currently an inconsistent mental model underpins the awards. In short, there is no clear articulation of what the awards do and why or what an MTUK climbing instructor 'looks like' or behaves like.

At an organisational level, the challenge is to overcome a split between the older, environment-specific awards that have a technical and safety management focus and the newer, pedagogically driven awards that focus on teaching behaviour. This generates some confusion in the current scheme. Our own research identifies that the reality of adventure practice is a combination of teaching and safety skills in adventure (e.g., Collins & Collins,

2015). This inconsistency is demonstrated by the diverse and disparate brief for the survey and is illustrated in the subjective data provided prior to the survey (although this has to be viewed as anecdotal given the nature of data collection), the interviews with Mountain Training prior to the survey design and the diverse responses of the working groups involved in the design of the survey (contributors adding to and removing aspects of each other's contributions). This was suggestive of no clear and *common* agreement toward the survey's aims; in addition to a clear representation of what good practice would 'look like'. It is unsurprising, therefore, that both surveys reflected a degree of confusion regarding the awards.

A clear mental model would provide a focal point for training course content, delivery and consistency. A clear philosophy acts at the core of provision that governs learning outcomes, drives delivery and assessment and that generates alignment between all aspects of the scheme. Importantly, a clear mental model would enable a clarity of message that would ease Mountain Training's presentation of the instructional awards to the public. A rebranding of the awards aligned with the changes to focus and structure would be matched with accurate descriptions of award holders' role and function. Clarifying this across the awards, instructor coach, monitor, supervisor etc. would be a logical change at this point.

Of course and without doubt, change is challenging and the management of change will require careful consideration once the mental model has been agreed. An upfront consideration of grand-parenting rights (how current award holders transfer to new levels) is an essential element. Aligned closely with this is the accrediting of prior learning and experience (APL/APEL). Both old awards and other awards would need to be mapped against the new scheme; a process for recognising these awards is essential. Consideration to APL/APEL for training is perhaps the easiest option. However assessment is more problematic, but a clear and articulated mental model would allow non-Mountain Training award holders to understand how their own practice may need to be adapted in order to pass. An element of grand-parenting is also extended to the stakeholders of Mountain Training. In short, the perceived influence of a male dominated group of mountaineers who make the decisions has to be seen to change.

Recommendations

Based on the data and our understanding of the present challenges, we make four recommendations which, we believe, will strengthen the scheme and respond to the concerns raised in the research. Recommendation #1 is fundamental and should be prioritised.

Recommendation #1: What does a Mountain Training instructor look like?

A clear mental model has to be established that can underpin the scheme. The questions "what does a Mountain Training instructor looked like, behave like and what skills should they have" need to be answered. A clear mental model forms the basis for instructor development, course content, course delivery, assessment and APL. The latter would seem particularly relevant, considering the number of practitioners who work across a number of adventure sports. There is considerable potential for collaboration, with consequently better service to clients, providers/deployers and aspirant instructors alike.

This mental model *could* apply across all Mountain Training awards, including summer and winter mountain leadership[3]. A mental model can be used to establish expected standards of behaviour, expected skill levels, values, attitudes, beliefs about the role and standards of professional conduct in relation to climbing instruction or leadership. Importantly, a model provides a basis against which an award holder can be measured. Consequently, a broad mental model that underpins all Mountain Training practice could then be contextualised to the demands of specific awards. At its core, however, lies Mountain Training's conceptualisation of its leaders and instructors.

Recommendation #2: Strengthening the Instructor's role.

Instructors role; strengthen the Instructor role to be distinctly different from that of the leader, guide or assistant. This can be achieved by strengthening the level of teaching skills developed in training courses and assessed for the award (we imagine this may require some retraining of staff). The existing coaching qualifications provide a starting point for these teaching skills but would need to be updated to reflect modern practices (adopt an evidence-based stance to teaching practice). Alongside the strengthening of the teaching skills, there is a need to provide an implicit message to promote separation of personal

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[3] We recognise that the brief related to the climbing awards

climbing performance (climbing skill) from professional *instructional* performance (teaching *and* climbing skill). This could be achieved by removing the personal climbing requirements for instructors and replacing this with a professional climbing requirement (e.g., "the instructor will be required to teach climbing activity with three clients on multi-pitch routes, normally of Very Severe standard"). This provides a clear message that the instructor's function is one of teaching in a particular domain and not performance in that domain. Implicit within this statement is the need for the instructor to be able to operate with their teaching role at the forefront of their mind. Concurrently, the logbook could be replaced with a professional development log in which personal climbing is **not** recorded. Instead, teaching and monitoring of climbing activities are recorded and key learning identified (a.k.a. a reflective development log).

Of course, the instructor *is* a climber to ensure safety and ability in the environment *but* training should not provide climbing skill; this should be assumed or assessed as a pre-requisite. Rather, training provides the professional skills, *some* of which *may* be specific climbing skills, such a short roping or specific adaptation to personal climbing techniques. If the instructor lacks personal climbing skills they are recommended to seek out coaching in an end of training action plan that is integrated into the professional development log. By moving the instructors 'position' towards a teaching role, a logical space then emerges for an assistant function, with a monitoring role.

Assistant role; An assistant need not be a climber BUT equally is not an instructor. The assistant role is to monitor climbing activity at the foot of a single pitch climb under the guidance of a Mountain Training qualified instructor. The role is primarily to spot and correct faults in belaying, sizing and fitting harnesses and helmets and checking tying in. The assistant can rig climbs on pre-place gear (by the qualified instructor, or the manufacturer of the wall or bolts) under direction from a qualified instructor. The assistant, by definition, does **not** work alone, does **not** take people climbing and does **not** place gear and operates using a small range of highly prescribed techniques. Consequently the training is routine based and assessment is competency based (we anticipate existing trainers will be able to transfer to this training easily, via a syllabus and update, that could be internet-based!). It is expected that the assistant does climb and abseil during training and assessment in order to facilitate demonstrations in front of a group, to illustrate a confidence in the environment and retain credibility with the group. Importantly, the assistant does not deviate from training or direction and demonstrates a clear capacity to follow instruction (even if poorly given!).

The assistant is expected to utilise the professional development log, highlighted earlier, as part of their own reflective practice, even if not progressing beyond this award. The seeds of a professional role and practice are sewn on entry to the scheme, maximising experience throughout the scheme supported by a mental model that values instructional experience and learning from experience. Consequently, entry to the scheme changes as follows.

The Registrant; on registering to become a Mountain Training Instructor the registrant has access to a series of internet-based support units. These units could cover topics such as Mountain Training's mental model/ philosophy, the structure and remit of the scheme and its awards, the legal responsibilities of a climbing instructor, community of practice and learning from experience. The registrant utilises a professional development logbook in which evidence of the registrant coaching (under supervision) and being coached are recorded. It is expected that the registrant is sponsored by an organisation or qualified individual who takes responsibility for introducing the registrant to a community of practice in which they can develop their skills. Mountain Training also manage a virtual community of practice that enables registrants to engage with the larger community (including more qualified and experienced instructors). To register we suggest an annual fee and, possibly, a shelf-life to prevent permanent registrants' status, plus a mechanism to monitor development.

We envisage that this single entry point and a universal Assistant Award for single pitch activities, both indoor and out, provides a foundation for two separate initial instructional awards. The Assistant level has a low level of teaching skill (i.e., Foundation Coach and proceduralised teaching (cf. I.D.E.A.S. as a linear model)). The instructional awards have a higher teaching skill (updated Development Coach) that enables them to teach lead climbing and to develop an Assistant Instructor's skill in addition to climbing skills (movement, rope and teaching skills).

Recommendation #3: A reduction in awards.

The registrant and assistant levels lead to two different instructor awards, Sport Climbing Instructor and Rock Climbing Instructor. The progression from Sport Climbing Instructor to Sports Climbing Coach provides a development that would focus on sports climbing and the climbing wall environment. The Rock Climbing Instructor provides a stepping stone to achieving the Rock Climbing Coach or the Mountaineering Instructor qualification. This

reduces the number of awards, thus simplifying the scheme. In doing so, this creates a separation of the dynamic environment ('trad' climbing) and the 'man-made' environment (sport climbing)[4]. A commonality between a potential 'trad' Rock Climbing Coach and Sports Climbing Coach could be exploited; a multi-pitch instructor training that draws together the different approaches in 'trad' and sport climbing[5] has the potential to be a very potent educational experience. Such a change effectively modularises the higher level awards, supporting a shared model of practice and community.

Overall, a greater flexibility could be achieved via a modularised approach that operates in tandem with current course delivery. However, practical problems emerge with trainees moving from one mode of training to another and we would suggest that the instructor selects a route for their development and transfer is not possible without guidance. Our experience suggests that modularised approaches actually cost more than traditional course delivery and are complex to manage. A stand-alone multi-pitch Rock Climbing Coach's training course/module could lead to three possible awards; 1) a purely Rock Climbing Coaches Award. 2) a Sports Climbing Coach (in conjunction with a sports coaching module) 3) the Mountain Instructors Award (in conjunction with a mountain skills teaching module as part of).

The current Foundation Coach and Development Coach Award provide the basis for the new teaching content of the instructional training courses and could provide a starting point for more generalised instructor training. These would not be stand-alone awards, however. Parity of teaching skill across the Instructors and Coaches Awards needs to be established and we would suggest a strengthened Development Coach syllabus to form the basis for the teaching skills. This will require training of an instructor education workforce.

It appears logical that the awards which focus on climbing activity in a sports environment have a sports performance development focus. In contrast, the rock climbing and mountain awards retain a more adventurous focus on the development of judgement. We would envisage that the proposed Performance Coach award could form the basis for the Sports Climbing Coach.

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[4] At a fundamental level the judgments required to 'place' protection make the 'trad' role more complex and risky.

The mountaineering awards would retain their connection with mountain leadership and the winter mountain environment. Table 1 shows a possible overall award structure.

Entry	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Registrant	**Climbing Assistant**	**Rock Climbing Instructor** **Sport Climbing Instructor**	**Mountaineering Instructor** **Rock climbing Coach** **Sport Climbing Coach**
	Single award	**Two awards**	**Three awards**

Table 1: *Possible six award structure.*

Recommendation #4: Developing the public profile and representation.

Having agreed the mental model and repositioned the awards, the revised scheme will need to be implemented. The language and structure must be publicly accessible so that the end user (the climber) can understand the role of each award holder and the context in which they operate. Each award should be presented in relation to the others with a contextualised articulation of the mental model for that award at its core. The award mental model must link directly to Mountain Training's mental model.

Climbers no longer develop just via the mountain walking-scrambling-climbing route. Accordingly, these recommendations should enable climbers who view their activity as a sport and develop via the climbing walls to also develop instructional skills while still retaining the ability for instructors to develop via a more traditional progression. It appears logical, therefore, that the decision-making bodies in relation to climbing instruction development reflect the diversity of modern climbing culture. In particular, the active development of positive female role models within the training teams for the awards and the decision-making bodies appears essential. Equally important, is a representation of the non-mountain based climbing community which needs to be recognised.

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