



UNION OF INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER ASSOCIATIONS

UIMLA STANDARD

**STANDARD FOR ACCESS TO AND PRACTISE OF THE PROFESSION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The first standard for the profession of Mountain Leader, agreed between several Member Associations, entitled the “*Community standard for access to and practise of the profession of European Mountain Leader*”, and known as the “*Common Platform*”, was written in 1992.

The Union of International Mountain Leader Associations (UIMLA) considers that after nearly 20 years it is appropriate to review the original *Common Platform* to reflect the current professional conditions in which Mountain Leaders are operating and the growth in interest in harmonisation of the profession beyond the borders of Europe.

A Mountain Leader is a professional with a thorough knowledge of the mountain environment and with the technical skills and physical capabilities to lead and educate clients in the mountains throughout the world.

The Mountain Leader’s primary goal is to assist people in the discovery and exploration of the natural and cultural environment of the mountains, including through education of environmental knowledge and technical skills, while maintaining the security of the group and individuals within it. The Mountain Leader has the diversity of skills and experience to operate at any time of the year, in all weather conditions and mountain ranges across the world.

II. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON PLATFORM

1989 — In the mind of the Treaty of Rome and to anticipate the future developments of the free movement in the European Community representatives from the national and professional mountain organisations of Austria, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Ireland and Italy met with the common objective of harmonising the content and the minimum standard of training for the profession of Mountain Leader. At this point in time the “European Mountain Leader Commission” (EMLC) was formed.

1992 – Representatives from Belgium, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy and Spain met to ratify and sign the “Community standard for access to and practise of the profession of European Mountain Leader”, also known as the “Common Platform”.

Between 1992 and 2004 it became clear that the title of European Mountain Leader did not accurately reflect the increasingly international nature of the work being undertaken by Mountain Leaders. Nor did it take in to account Mountain Leaders living and working outwith the European Union. During this period however the Common Platform did provide the basis for a number of countries to join CEAM (Belgium, Poland, Switzerland and Andorra).

2004 – Representatives from Andorra, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Spain and Switzerland met in North Wales, with the common objective of agreeing a constitution for a “Union of International Mountain Leader Associations” (UIMLA). UIMLA replaced the EMLC and opened up membership to all nations with an interest in the profession of International Mountain Leader. The UIMLA Constitution was formally signed in Chambéry, France, November 27th.

2006 – UIMLA formed a working group charged with the review of the “Community standard for access to and practise of the profession of European Mountain Leader”. In 2009 an initial revision entitled “Worldwide standard for access to and practise of the profession of International Mountain Leader” was produced for consultation

2010 – UIMLA instructed a working group to develop the document presented in 2009 based on the comments received from the Member Associations.

2012 – The revised UIMLA Standard, “Standard for access to and practise of the profession of the International Mountain Leader”, was accepted at the Annual General Assembly of UIMLA.

III. STANDARD FOR ACCESS TO AND PRACTISE OF THE PROFESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER

1.1 CHAPTER 1: GENERAL CONDITIONS

1.1.1 Sub-chapter 1: Rights and prerogatives of the International Mountain Leader

Article 1:

1. Access to the profession and practice of the International Mountain Leader (IML) under the auspice of the UIMLA are subject to the conditions presented within this Standard.
2. The profession of the IML may be practised as a principal or secondary profession, full or part time or seasonally.

Article 2:

1. The IML is qualified to lead, teach, support and train clients, paying or otherwise, to all areas in all seasons, including snow covered terrain, except glaciers and or where the techniques of roped climbing/alpinism are required for progression. Glaciers may only be crossed where they form part of a nationally/internationally accepted and waymarked walking route and the use of a harness and rope is not necessary for progression.
2. All forms of skiing are not permitted. Snowshoeing is permitted.

Article 3:

1. The qualified IML must practice on the basis of the legislative, regulatory or administrative arrangements in the country where they are resident and or countries where they are working.
2. The Aspirant IML is a person progressing through the training and assessment process but who has not yet qualified.
3. The Aspirant IML must practice on the basis of legislative, regulatory or administrative arrangements in the country where they are resident and or countries where they are training and or working.
4. The Aspirant IML must practice under the supervision of a qualified IML.

1.1.2 Sub-chapter 2: The authorisation to practise

Article 4:

1. The use of the title "International Mountain Leader" and the wearing of the UIMLA badge is subject to authorisation; this authorisation is issued by the National Association, subject to the approval of UIMLA, and where required the appropriate national government authority.
2. The administrative authorisation to practice attests to the technical and professional ability of the IML.

Article 5:

1. The technical and professional ability is attested by the following of training, consolidation and assessment corresponding to this Standard.
2. To maintain the authorisation to practice the IML must undertake a programme of Continuing Professional Development as defined by their National Association or local legal authority and approved by UIMLA. The minimum requirement is detailed in the UIMLA Continuing Professional Development policy.
3. The aptitude and competency requirements are attested according to the means defined by the UIMLA and or the National Association and or by the appropriate national government authority.

Article 6:

1. The authorisation referred to in Article 4 is provided in the form of an annually validated carnet showing:
 - the name and address of the National Association;
 - the full name of the IML;
 - The National Association membership number of the IML;
 - the signature of the IML;
 - a passport style photograph of the IML;
 - if necessary the limitation of remit as defined in the UIMLA Standard ; and
 - the current UIMLA annual sticker.
2. The carnet is awarded with respect to the regulations defined at Article 5.
3. The use of the carnet and UIMLA badge, can be withdrawn, permanently or temporarily, under conditions defined UIMLA, and implemented by the National Association, subject to the appropriate local legal regime.

1.1.3 Sub-chapter 3: Miscellaneous Conditions

Article 7:

The practice of the activities listed in Article 2 requires of the professional the obligation to subscribe to a public liability insurance covering the professional practice in all forms and on conditions defined by the National Association.

Article 8:

The authorisation to operate freely within member countries is recognised as valid by the National Associations, subject to local laws, regulations and local custom and practice.

1.2 CHAPTER 2: CONDITIONS RELATING TO THE STANDARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

1.2.1 Sub-chapter 1: General

Article 9:

1. The training has to be appropriate to the aptitude, ability and competence one would expect from one such professional in technical and teaching areas as well as safety in the mountains.
2. The minimum level of the professional training is defined by this Standard as set out in the attached Annex entitled "*Specification of competencies, knowledge, skills and abilities of the International Mountain Leader*".

1.2.2 Sub-chapter 2: Entry requirements to the profession of the IML

Article 10:

Access to training requires the following:

1. Minimum age: as defined by the National Association and subject to national law.
2. Physical fitness to practice the profession, as defined by the National Association or the local legal authority, which may take the form of a medical certificate or a personal declaration of fitness.
3. Requirements of existing qualification, technical ability and mountaineering experience as defined by the National Association, or local legal authority.

1.2.3 Sub-chapter 3: Specification of the profession of IML

Article 11:

1. The title “*International Mountain Leader*” indicates the completion of a programme of structured professional training, consolidation and assessment.
2. The consolidation period should be defined by the National Association, but must include a minimum of 20 days of leadership experience in a variety of weather conditions and mountain terrain, as permitted by the local legal authority. The consolidation may be completed during the training period but must be independent of the training.
3. The training will allow the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities as described in the Annex.
4. The training and assessment is controlled and measured by tests and exams.
5. No one may complete the final assessment without having completed all the elements of training. Exceptions may be granted where an equivalent element of the training is accepted by the National Association and or local legal authority.

Article 12:

1. The training and assessment will consist of one or more practical courses.
2. The training and assessment activities of candidates must be recorded in a suitable log book.
3. The National Association or national regulations will determine the frequency and length of the training and assessment courses such that they are consistent with this Standard.
4. Trainers and assessors must be suitably qualified and experienced IMLs or IFMGA Guides. Specialist subject teachers do not need to be IMLs or Guides, for example teachers of meteorology, physiology, first aid, provided the training and assessment is managed by an IML.
5. The National Association must ensure the quality of the training and assessment and the suitability of trainers, assessors and specialist subject teachers.
6. A member appointed by the National Association must be present during the assessments.

Article 13:

The training and assessment will consist of theory and practical work. In all cases priority will be given to practical work.

Article 14:

As a minimum of training must include:

- security in mountainous terrain and river crossing;
- navigation and orientation;
- first aid and rescue;
- group leadership;
- teaching of technical skills and environmental knowledge;
- mountain environment;
- anatomy and physiology;
- weather;
- mountain survival and bivouacking;
- physical ability;
- legal and economic considerations;
- multi day activities and expeditions;
- snow covered terrain.

It is recognised that in some countries the practice of working in snow covered terrain is not practical and is not part of local custom and practice. In these instances the training and assessment must include working in snow covered terrain as an emergency situation where unseasonal snowfall or relic snow patches may occur (including avalanche awareness, bivouac and modes of travel). The Carnet must be clearly endorsed to show this limitation (e.g. NO SNOW). This paragraph does not apply in Europe.

Article 15:

1. Each topic listed in Article 14 shall be examined separately or as part of a continuous assessment.
2. It is essential that candidates pass an assessment in the topics listed in Article 14. Failure of the assessment will eliminate candidates from qualifying as an IML.

Article 16:

All the training and assessment must take place within five years. In exceptional circumstances, such as illness, pregnancy or maternity leave, the National Association may allow a longer period.

Article 17:

1. The National Association must ensure that the organisation of the courses is correct with regard to:
 - location;
 - duration;
 - staffing;
 - type of training and assessment; and
 - monitoring of training and assessment standards.

Article 18:

The aspirant IML may attend any part of their training and assessment in any country where the respective National Association training and assessment systems are compatible. The UIMLA encourage that part of a country's training and assessment programme be held in another country.

1.3 CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF, THE STANDARD

Article 19:

1. This document will come in to effect on November 9th, 2012.
2. Those already holding the IML Carnet must ensure their understanding of this Standard.
3. It is the responsibility of each National Association to inform their members of this Standard.

IV. ANNEX TO THE STANDARD FOR ACCESS TO AND PRACTISE OF THE PROFESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER

Specification of competencies, knowledge, skills and abilities of the International Mountain Leader

1. SECURITY IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN

1.1 List of competencies

The IML must have the knowledge and techniques needed to safeguard groups in the mountain as related to real and objective dangers. The IML must be able to use simple equipment, for example a trekking rope, slings and karabiners but not climbing harness, as a mean of providing security in exceptional circumstances, such as steep ground, rock steps and short stretches of fixed equipment. The IML must be able to safeguard groups when crossing rivers using a variety of appropriate techniques.

1.2 Method of training

The training must be practical. The length of the training is the responsibility of the National Association and or the local legal authority.

1.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must comprise a practical demonstration of skills and knowledge. The length of the assessment is the responsibility of the National Association and or the local legal authority.

2. NAVIGATION

2.1 List of competencies

The IML must be experienced with the techniques and tools of mountain orientation and navigation so that they can travel safely in all situations and conditions. The skills and knowledge must include:

- the use of topographic maps of differing type, accuracy and scale;
- the use of a compass;
- the use of a GPS;
- the use of an altimeter;
- the use of different navigation techniques;
- navigation off paths using just a map;
- navigation off paths in conditions of very poor visibility, at night and in difficult conditions, using a map, compass and altimeter only; and
- route preparation and realisation, including a route card.

2.2 Method of training

The training must be both theoretical and practical.

2.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must comprise a practical demonstration of skills and knowledge in both summer and winter conditions. The assessment must include: (a) a test in the mountains in difficult conditions and/or at night in a limited time; and (b) a test in a limited time using fixed check points marked on a map. The map scale should be appropriate to what is locally available but should not be a purpose made orienteering map.

3. FIRST AID AND RESCUE

3.1 List of competencies

The IML must have sufficient competence with first aid and basic rescue methods such that they may operate unassisted in remote and isolated areas. The skills and knowledge must include:

- first aid for mountain environments, in both summer and winter specific scenarios;
- organisation of a rescue (both improvised and by official rescue agencies);
- the use of appropriate communication equipment, including mobile and satellite telephones, radios and personal location beacons; and
- basic communication in a foreign language.

3.2 Method of training

The training must be both theoretical and practical. First aid training and assessment may be undertaken separate from the IML training and should comprise a minimum of 2 days training appropriate to a mountain environment.

3.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must comprise a practical demonstration of skills and knowledge. With regard to first aid this may be demonstrated by a current first aid qualification, applicable to remote and isolated areas, from an external provider.

4. GROUP LEADERSHIP

4.1 List of competencies

The IML must be able to manage and enthuse a group in the mountain environment, whilst also taking into account the objective and subjective dangers of the route. In particular the ability to manage a group will include:

- presentation of activity programmes;
- understanding of group psychology
- organisation and control of the group;
- adaptation of the programme to suit different abilities;
- basic communication in a foreign language; and
- professional conduct and appearance.

4.2 Method of training

The training must be practical.

4.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical and through continuous assessment.

5. TEACHING

5.1 List of competencies

The IML also has the role of an educator, hence the IML must have an understanding of the teaching/coaching methods which will enable the passing on of skills and knowledge (both technical and environmental) to others, both in relation to the activities undertaken and to the mountain environment.

5.2 Method of training

The training must be both theoretical and practical.

5.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical and through continuous assessment.

6. MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT

6.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a good knowledge of:

- the natural mountain environment, including flora, fauna, geology and geography;
- the mountain culture/human environment;
- access to the mountains and their conservation and protection.

The IML must be able to pass on this knowledge to those that they lead or teach.

6.2 Method of training

The training must comprise both theoretical and practical elements.

6.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include both theoretical and practical elements.

7. ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

7.1 List of competencies

The IML must have an understanding of anatomy and physiology as they relate to walking activities in the mountains, including:

- physical preparation;
- diet;
- characteristics of mountain exercise;
- preventing injuries;
- tiredness and recuperation;
- the effects of altitude; and
- the effects of cold and heat.

7.2 Method of training

The training must be predominantly theoretical.

7.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include a written test.

8. WEATHER

8.1 List of competencies

The IML must have an understanding of weather systems and be capable of interpreting weather forecasts, weather maps including synoptic charts and using basic weather instruments and natural signs to aid in practical forecasting. The IML must also be aware of the specific aspects of mountain weather and of interpreting weather forecasts in the mountains.

8.2 Method of training

The training must comprise both theoretical and practical elements.

8.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include either a written or oral test of knowledge.

9. MOUNTAIN SURVIVAL/BIVOUACKING

9.1 List of competencies

The IML must be able to organise and assure the well being and safety of the group without external support. This must include:

- the ability to organise an improvised bivouac, in both summer and snow covered conditions; and
- the ability to look after the group and themselves in difficult weather conditions.

9.2 Method of training

The training must be predominantly practical.

9.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical and include the construction of planned bivouac, without external support and including the preparation of meals, for at least one night of a three day two night expedition. This should take place in both summer and snow covered conditions. One night may be spent in a hut or similar accommodation, but one night must comprise an overnight bivouac (snow hole in snow covered conditions and without a tent in summer).

10. PHYSICAL ABILITY

10.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a high level of physical fitness and be able to sustain a high level of physical effort over a prolonged period.

10.2 Method of training

The training must be practical to ensure that the Mountain Leader meets the required standard of fitness.

10.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical and include as a minimum an assessment of:

- the ability to walk a snow free route for a minimum period of 6 hours, carrying a rucksack with a minimum weight of 8 kg - 10 kg at any time, at an average speed of 5 km/hour on the flat while ascending a minimum of 1500 m at a minimum rate of 500 m of ascent per hour; and
- subsequently an assessment of the ease and efficiency of movement, ability and balance of the leader on varied terrain with the same weight of rucksack.

11. LEGAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a level of legal and economic understanding appropriate to the environment in which they operate whether in an employed, self employed or voluntary capacity. Specifically the IML must understand:

- the legal basis for the regulation of the profession;
- taxation and social security as it applies to the profession;
- public and criminal responsibilities;
- insurance;
- the economic environment; and
- methods of marketing.

11.2 Method of training

The training must be theoretical.

11.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must comprise either a written or oral test of knowledge.

12. MULTI-DAY ACTIVITIES

12.1 List of competencies

The IML must be able to organise (programme, route planning), manage the logistics (equipment, food, transport) of and lead multi-day activities in the mountains in both summer and winter conditions.

12.2 Method of training

The training must comprise practical elements.

12.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical through continuous assessment.

13. SNOW COVERED TERRAIN

13.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a good knowledge of snow covered terrain, the additional hazards present, and the techniques and equipment needed to travel safely. This may include the use of snowshoes and other equipment as appropriate to the terrain and conditions and as allowed by national regulations.

The IML must have an understanding of snow and avalanche hazards including basic avalanche forecasting so as to be able to safely lead groups on appropriate terrain.

The IML must be able to lead a group on snow covered mountainous terrain. The IML may operate on snow covered mountainous terrain, other than glaciers, except where the techniques of roped climbing/alpinism are required. This will include the ability to:

- obtain and interpret an avalanche bulletin;
- plan an appropriate route;
- navigation off track using just a map;
- navigation off track in conditions of very poor visibility, at night and in difficult conditions, using a map, compass and altimeter only; and
- lead a group in difficult conditions (cold, high winds, darkness);
- select and use personal equipment, for both the leader and the group, appropriate to the terrain and conditions and as allowed by national regulations;
- assess snow conditions and avalanche hazard;
- undertake a search using an avalanche transceiver; and
- undertake the location and rescue of a buried casualty.

The IML must be able to pass on this knowledge to those that they lead.

13.2 Method of training

The training must be comprise both theoretical and practical elements.

13.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include both theoretical and practical elements and at least three days must comprise a self-sufficient expedition during which at least one night must be spent in a planned bivouac (which must be a snow hole). The winter assessment must take place on snow covered terrain during the winter season. During the assessment each candidate shall successfully complete a transceiver search. The transceiver search shall comprise the location of 2 transceivers inside a rucksack buried in snow at a depth of approximately 0.5 m in under 8 minutes. The buried transceivers shall be approximately 5 m apart in a level area. It is not necessary to dig out the transceivers, but the rucksack must be located with a probe. The candidate should start the search approximately 50 m – 80 m from the targets. The size of the search area must be 50m x 50m.

14. DURATION OF TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

The total number of days of training must be a minimum of 40 days of which a minimum of 10 days must be in snow covered terrain. The total number of days of the assessment will be defined by the National Association and or local regulations and must be approved by UIMLA.