



Mountain Skills Scheme

Before you start:

It is highly recommended that you have some previous hillwalking experience prior to starting Mountain Skills (MS) training. There is no minimum age limit to MS training or assessment.

MS Training

MS training is divided into three blocks, MS1, MS2 and MS Assessment. MS1 and MS2 are the basic training blocks covering all aspects of hillwalking that the candidate will require to become a self-sufficient hill user.

MS1: This course includes map-reading and simple navigation techniques, recognition of natural features, distance measurement and timing of walks. Mountain hazards are also covered, as is personal equipment such as correct clothing and emergency equipment.

MS2: This course builds on MS1. It covers the use of a compass, route-planning and the preparation of route cards, night navigation, scrambling, mountain rescue and emergency procedures.

MS1 and MS2 are generally run over two-day periods and comprise a mixture of indoor informal lectures/discussions and outdoor practical sessions. The ratio for MS1 and MS2 is one instructor to six candidates.

MS Consolidation:

The consolidation period gives candidates the chance to practise and consolidate the skills they have learnt during training. At least 14 walks in a number of different upland areas of Ireland should be recorded in an official logbook during this time. At least four of these walks should be within two months of MS assessment date.

MS Assessment:

MS Assessment is held over two days, and comprises both written and practical evaluation, including a night navigation exercise. Assessment can again be arranged through individual providers. The MS scheme is not a certified qualification and Mountaineering Ireland does not produce certificates upon successful completion of the assessment. Many providers, however, will be happy to provide candidates with a letter of attendance and, in the case of MS assessment, a letter of completion. The ratio for MS assessment is one instructor to four candidates.

Do I need all three blocks?

Although the MS scheme is set out in a naturally progressive learning structure, candidates may choose to undertake only one block, or complete the two training blocks but not undertake the third assessment block. Very experienced candidates, who can demonstrate a wealth of experience gained through many years of hillwalking, may progress straight to the assessment block. In this case, you will be required to log 28 walks rather than the usual 14 walks.

Whatever approach you would like to follow, our approved training providers will be able to help and guide you into the scheme at a level that will best suit you.

What next?

For more information, costs and to start your MS training, contact one of our approved providers who hold MS1 and MS2 training courses around the country on a regular basis. Visit our course calendar to see when and where courses are running. Individuals wishing to organise a group course at a specific location/date should also contact providers to discuss this possibility. Some providers will also arrange accommodation, food, and transport if necessary.