

PENRITH MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

INDUCTION SYLLABUS AND
PROGRESSION THROUGH TO PROBATION & FULL
TEAM STATUS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All individuals wishing to apply to Penrith Mountain Rescue Team for operational membership will bring varying skills to the organisation; however, to ensure the safety of all members and casualties, it is imperative that the individual has competence and experience in hillwalking and mountaineering, which can be augmented through training to ensure that they meet the requirement of a full team member. Additionally they should be able to fit into the team as a member of a closely collaborative group, therefore, interpersonal skills are important to be taken into consideration.

This document describes the process for applications for membership of Penrith Mountain Rescue Team through to acceptance of a candidate for Full Team Membership. In doing so it:

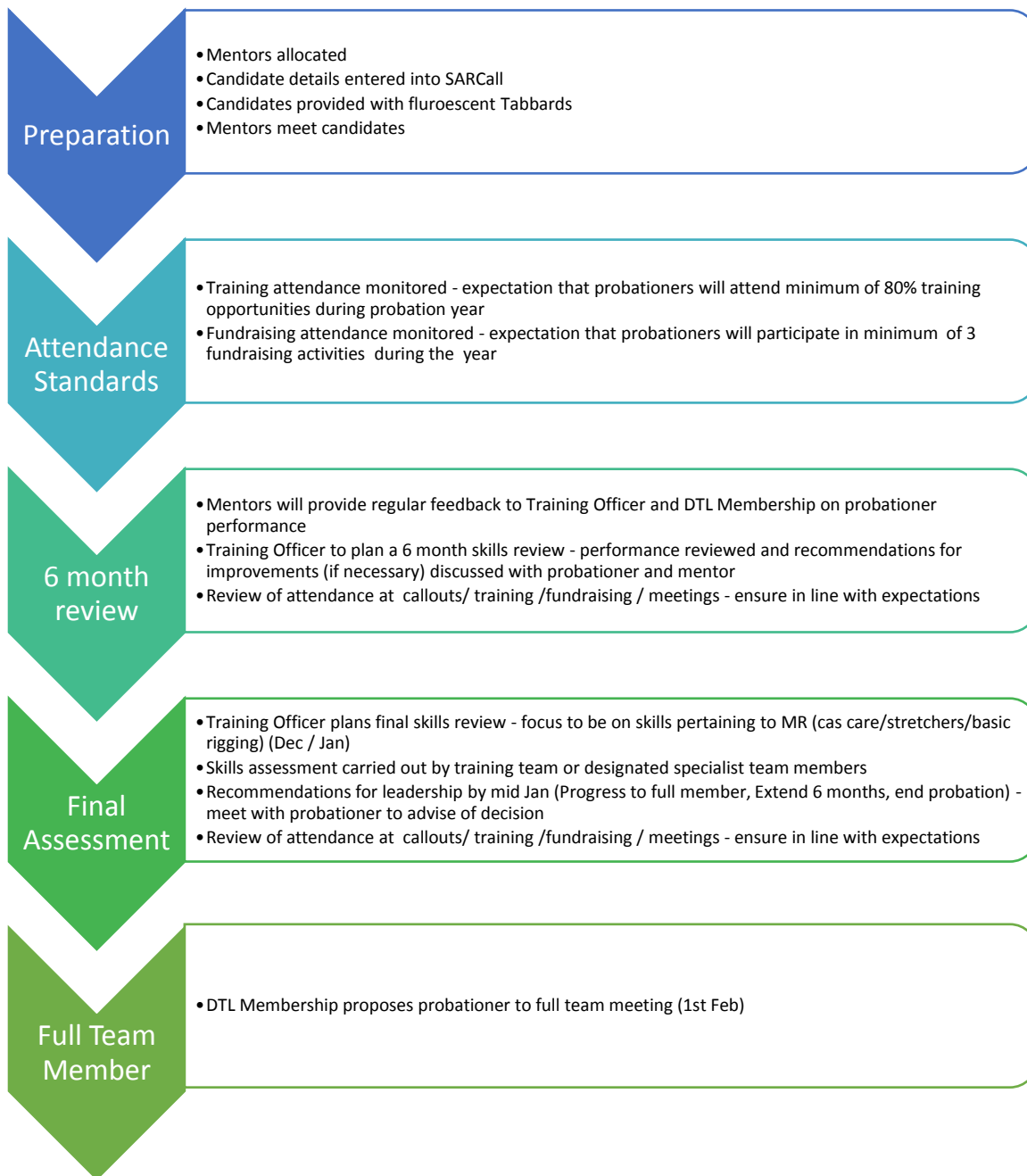
- Provides a consistent level of expectation of the candidates performance to pass through the induction, probation and full team membership gates
- Ensures that the timeline for progression through the stages is clear
- Ensures transparency of approach to recruiting and retention of new members

During training ALL inductees and probationers will be required to wear Fluorescent jackets to ensure they can be easily identified when on training or callouts.

PHASE 1 INDUCTION (1st October-31st Jan)



PHASE 2 – PROBATION (1st Feb-31st Jan)



2. INDUCTION SELECTION AND PROBATIONER ASSESSMENT PHASES

2.1. Training Team Review

The training team with the leadership will review the numbers for intake in the forthcoming year and will discuss the assessment dates and criteria for assessment.

2.2. Application Review

The Leadership will review the applications in line with the level required for team membership. Candidates are asked to complete a simple log of walks and activities carried out in the mountains. The leadership will review the application looking for evidence of recent varied activities in a number of mountainous areas and in a wide range of weather and terrain conditions - unsuccessful candidates will be those that are outside of the catchment area, or can provide very little detail of mountain experience, or where mountain experience is stated as only being in specific seasons or on known popular tourist footpath routes. It is recognised that application reviews are not a comprehensive assessment of a candidate's suitability for entry to the team and therefore there will be a number of stages that candidate would need to complete prior to recommendation to the team for entry as a probationary member.

2.3. Meeting with Team Leader and Deputies

This meeting will consist of a presentation about the team and some open discussion about commitment, level of competence required on entry and an opportunity for the candidates to ask questions and for them to give some background to their application. It is usual for candidates to self-select at this stage if they feel they are unable to continue due to commitment concerns, or in some cases a lack of preparedness for assessment.

The remaining candidates will be advised of the 4 sessions they will be required to attend prior to selection as a probationer. The candidates are advised that the sessions will be formally assessed – dates will be set and it will be unlikely these would be changed to suit candidates. Candidates are informed that some of them may not be successful following the assessments.

3. ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES DURING MOUNTAIN DAY AND NIGHT TIME NAVIGATION

The selection of candidates should be carried out in an objective manner. The team requires its members to be sufficiently hill fit and capable of navigation and movement in all weathers and terrains without requiring to remain on major footpaths. Of paramount importance is the ability of the candidate to work as a team member, therefore technical hill going skills should not be the only area assessed.

The key areas to assess COULD BE:

3.1. Navigation

Navigation is a fundamental skill in mountain walking and mountain rescue. The candidate must be confident of their route no matter how limited the visibility. Candidates' ability as a navigator should allow them to be flexible in their plans and to react to changing conditions. Their navigation should be such that they can navigate efficiently, accurately and confidently while still being able to look after themselves, fellow team members and casualties, avoid hazards wherever possible.

Candidates will be expected to choose the appropriate navigation technique for the prevailing conditions.

Candidates should be PROFICIENT in the following:

- maps, scales and conventional signs
- contours and other methods of showing relief
- topographical features
- relating the map to the ground and vice versa
- measuring distance on the map and the ground.
- navigating across country with map alone.
- compasses and other navigation aids.
- methods of identifying features and position.
- methods of relocation.
- methods for navigating across country in poor visibility and in darkness.
- route planning.

3.2. Hazards of Steep Ground

Candidates should be familiar with techniques to ensure safe travel through steep and broken ground. They should demonstrate proficiency in negotiating the terrain appropriately

3.3. Medical

Candidates should preferably hold a current first aid certificate, but in any case have an understanding of the following conditions, their causes, signs, symptoms, prevention and treatment:

hypothermia (exposure) and its treatment both in the field and at base.

cold injuries.

heat disorders.

allergic reactions.

common medical problems, e.g. asthma, diabetes, blisters, sprains.

The assessor will chose a suitable scenario for the candidates to address with limited medical equipment or knowledge during a Mountain day.

3.4. Background Knowledge

Candidates should have a basic understanding of other related areas for Mountain Rescue and Mountain Walking. These areas may be assessed through discussion with or observation of the candidate during the assessment sessions and may include:

environmental hazards (loose rock/flood/lightning/selection of water crossing points);

emergency procedures in the event of an accident;

personal equipment required for mountain walks – taking in to account weather and terrain;

weather including weather developments associated with different air masses, major cloud forms, changes in wind direction and in atmospheric pressure – with elementary practical identification of cloud types, wind speed and temperatures;

personal and leadership skills, including dynamic risk assessment; positive decision making; and effective communication;

3.5. Outcome

Following each assessment session, the Training Officer and members of the assessment team (or appointed persons) will discuss the inductee's performance and complete an assessment sheet with recommendations for further progress or removal from the process.

This will be communicated to the Leadership team who will advise the candidates of the outcome.

PLEASE SEE EXAMPLE ASSESSMENT SHEET AT END OF DOCUMENT

4. WINTER TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Inductees who have completed successful Night and Day hill assessments will be invited to attend a Winter Skills training session (single day in Lakes or preferably weekend in Scotland) during January/February.

The objective will be to ensure that the inductee can demonstrate a personal basic level winter mountaineering skills and additionally, the candidate will continue to be monitored on team work and group awareness capability.

At the end of this assessment session, the performance of the candidate will be reviewed and discussed with the Leadership and the decision made to invite the candidate to become a probationer member of the team.

A summary of the personal skills to be successfully demonstrated over the course of the session are:

- essential skills of walking with an axe and crampons,
- ice axe self-arrest,
- navigation,
- winter safety understanding ,
- avalanche avoidance awareness,
- there should be no requirement for the candidate to demonstrate use of a rope

5. ASSESSMENT OF PROBATIONERS AT INTERIM REVIEW (July)

All probationers will be expected to undertake an interim skills review which will be held during a normal team training session during July. It is expected that they will be able to demonstrate a level of skill over and above the personal mountaineering skills, for example:

- Stretcher assembly
- Basic casualty care scenario – including assembly of gases
- Assistance to crag scenario (anchor setting, member of hauling party)
- Assistance in evacuation of casualty

At the end of session, the probationer's performance will be reviewed by the Training Officer, Training team (or appointed persons) and leadership and recommendation for any development plan will be communicated to both the probationer and their mentor.

This assessment will be documented.

6. FINAL ASSESSMENT OF PROBATIONER PRIOR TO PROGRESSION TO FULL TEAM STATUS (Dec/Jan)

All probationers are required to complete a final assessment prior to recommendation for full team status.

There will be 3 possible outcomes:

- Pass – probationer proposed to team as full team member at Feb meeting
- Defer – probation extended for a period of 6 months at which point a final assessment will be required. Probationer will be given a clear indication of the areas for improvement
- Reject – probationer advised that their membership is to be terminated

The training officer in conjunction with the leadership will define the set of skills to be demonstrated at this final assessment, but would be likely to include:

- Managing a simple casualty care scenario – trauma and medical
- Minimum water awareness
- Use of equipment – ID/Tube/Backrope
- Helicopter awareness
- Operational support (radio comms / support to search management)

Additionally the candidate would have attended and participated in 80% of training opportunities

This assessment will be documented.

7. APPLICATIONS FROM CURRENT MEMBERS OF OTHER RESCUE TEAMS

Only candidates from other teams who hold Full team status will be permitted to apply to the team mid-way through any year. Candidates who are probationary members or ex-members will be expected to apply in the standard way.

They will apply in the same way as perspective candidates by submitting a completed application form.

DTL Membership will contact their team leader to request a reference.

If reference satisfactory, the candidate will be asked to join as a probationer and allocated a mentor.

The candidate's performance will be monitored by the Leadership and Training team. Preferably the candidate will be a probationary member for 6 months – after which it is expected that the candidate will be proposed as a full team member, unless performance indicates otherwise. The candidate is expected to attend 80% of the training opportunities within this time frame.

8. ROLE OF THE TEAM ASSESSORS

The assessors are appointed by the Leadership from within the team, but led by the Training Officer.

The assessors should structure the tasks to ensure that all relevant navigation techniques are seen. Assessors need to be certain that any errors are through lack of ability rather than as a result of 'exam nerves' or their own failure to communicate clearly.

Very careful and precise briefing of the candidate concerning what is being asked of them is essential. The other candidates must also be briefed about their role while someone else is leading a section.

Candidates should be given time to demonstrate their level of navigation ability to the assessor. They should be allowed to complete the task to the best of their ability and not be pressured into making quick decisions and mistakes.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to adopt the appropriate technique for the situation. The assessor should look at the task set from the viewpoint of someone navigating over unfamiliar ground in a stressful situation.

A balance must be struck between micro-navigation, and the broader style of navigation used when following a path or defined feature. Micro-navigation (particularly at night) can allow a large number of comparable legs to be set in a relatively short space of time.

In all cases the elements of party management demonstrated by the candidates should not be neglected.

Visibility will obviously influence the type of navigation tasks set, as assessors must satisfy themselves that candidates can navigate in the full range of weather conditions. When the weather is good then more accurate navigation can be asked for to compensate for the lack of poor visibility.

For Mountain Rescue, night navigation is required. In these situations the skill of the assessor in selecting the appropriate terrain and setting suitable tasks is vital to the success of the assessment.

Every navigation task set should help the assessor to draw relevant conclusions about the candidate. Candidates who make a simple mistake should be given time to resolve the situation.

The ability to identify and correct an error is an essential skill for any team member. Navigation ability must be tested with map and compass alone without the use of GPS, altimeter or other similar equipment.

Self-preparedness and movement over varied terrain will be observed by the assessors as part of the navigation assessment.

9. ROLE OF TEAM MENTORS

Mentors to probationary members should be chosen from full team members who have recently completed their probationary period.

The objective of mentorship is for the mentor to provide advice and guidance on how they progressed through the process and ensuring that the probationer is given support from a peer. Activities will include, wherever possible being 'buddied up' with their mentee on callouts and training sessions, going out for 1-2-1 hillwalks to familiarise the mentee with the team's area, meeting their mentee at base to talk them through kit and protocols, to provide advice and guidance on general team activities.

The mentor will be selected by the Training Officer in conjunction with the Leadership team and consideration given to matching personality and home location to their mentee.

10. EQUIPMENT PROVISION

Probationer

It is team policy to provide no equipment to probationary members. However, all probationers will be provided with a high vis vest marked with Mountain Rescue decal to ensure that they are identified as being with the team when on training/callouts. Additionally, when on fundraising and PR events, the probationers may be given items of team clothing to ensure consistent look and feel particularly in photographs. Probationers will be allowed to use team Radios and Handheld torches but must return these at the end of training/callouts. Probationers will not be permitted keys to the base until voted in as full team members. Probationers will of course be entitled to use appropriate items of general use PPE such as helmets/harnesses/drysuits.

All team members should provide their own set of maps – this should specifically include areas within the team boundaries – Explorer 5 (North east Lake District), Landranger 90 (Penrith and Keswick), Landranger 91 (Appleby), Explorer 315 (Carlisle), Landranger 86 (Haltwhistle and Brampton), Landranger 85 (Carlisle & Solway Firth). It is also recommended that neighbouring area maps be procured – OL7 (South East Lake District).

Probationer members should ensure that they have adequate personal equipment – Good waterproofs/head/handtorches/GPS/compass/shelter/spare warm clothing/flask/food/Ice Axe (T (2) rated)/Crampons/Maps.

If any personal equipment is lost or damaged on team activities, the team will re-imburse the individual. Individuals may also be entitled to receive discounts for shops and manufacturers – the Quartermaster will be able to advise on the deals in force at any time.

Full team member

Individuals will be entitled to receive the following articles, but will return these on request or when they cease to be an operational team member:

- Waterproof Jacket
- Salopettes
- Base Layer
- T Shirt
- Windproof Jacket
- Head torch
- Radio
- First Aid kit

EXAMPLE INDUCTION ASSESSMENT SHEET

CANDIDATE NAME:	DATE OF ASSESSMENT:
ASSESSMENT TYPE:	
ASSESSORS NAMES:	
RESULT: PASS FAIL DEFER FOR DISCUSSION	
DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT: (include weather/terrain/conditions/start-finish times)	

NAVIGATION	P	F	D		P	F	D
Maps, scales and conventional signs				Demonstrate techniques to ensure safe travel through steep and broken ground			
Contours and other methods of showing relief				MEDICAL	P	F	D
Topographical features				Demonstrate understanding of one of the following conditions, their causes, signs, symptoms, prevention and treatment through a scenario (hypothermia/cold-heat injuries/allergic reaction/general medical/basic trauma)			
Measuring distance on the map and the ground				BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	P	F	D
Navigating across country with map alone				environmental hazards (loose rock/flood/lightening/selection of water crossing points)			
Compasses and other navigation aids				emergency procedures in the event of an accident			
Methods of identifying features and position				personal equipment required for mountain walks – taking in to account weather and terrain			
Methods of relocation				weather including weather developments associated with different air masses, major cloud forms, changes in wind direction and in atmospheric pressure – with elementary practical identification of cloud types, wind speed and temperatures			
Methods for navigating across country in poor visibility and in darkness				personal and leadership skills, including dynamic risk assessment; positive decision making; and effective communication			
Route planning							

Recommendation