



TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME

Version v2406

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This version replaces all previous versions

New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (Inc)
PO Box 10 | Aoraki Mount Cook 7946
info@nzmgga.org.nz | www.nzmgga.org.nz

Introduction

The New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA) is recognised as the professional association for certified mountain guides in New Zealand. It sets and maintains standards for admission to, training and certification, and practice of the mountain guiding profession. The NZMGA system of training and assessing guides is well established and has been in place for almost four decades and the effort to continually improve and apply new training and guiding techniques is ongoing to maintain high standards of guiding professionals.

The NZMGA is affiliated with the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA) and aligns with the international benchmark of the IFMGA's training and certification scheme. The IFMGA membership now totals national associations of 27 mountain countries around the world. The result is a rich flow of skill and knowledge dedicated to protecting the safety of and public interest in guided mountain travel.

Document Control

Date	Version #	Changes
September 2010	1901	Inclusion of Rock Exam, Ski Guide Training, Rock Guide Training and changes of Mountain Skills Course Snow and Ice Guides Course
June 2020	2006	Major update including pathway prerequisites
December 2020	2012	
December 2023	2312	Wording update to Climb 2 requirements.
June 2024	2406	Update Alpine Trekking Pathway guidelines and pre-reqs

Published

The NZMGA Training and Certification Programme is available publicly online at www.nzmga.org.nz.

Consultation

The NZMGA Training and Certification Programme has been developed in consultation with industry experts. It is reviewed on amendment and all changes to this document are approved by the Technical Sub Committee (TSC) and ratified by the Executive Committee (Committee) of the NZMGA.

The TSC consists of:

- All the members of the Committee that are fully qualified IFMGA guides. Committee members are elected by NZMGA membership and serve a term of 2 years;
- The Training Officer of the NZMGA who as an employee of the Association is a non-voting member of the Committee and TSC;
- Additional members that may be co-opted by the Chair of TSC so that there are around 10 contributing members at any time for robust decision making. Co-opted members are fully qualified IFMGA guides that may be industry leaders, respected experts in their field, current or past Assessors/Trainers for the Association and/or past Committee members for continuity.

The TSC responsibilities include establishing standards of competence applying to different grades of certificates and recommending these to the Committee for ratification. For further information on the governance procedures of the NZMGA refer to the **NZMGA Constitution**, available from the Administrative Officer (admin@nzmga.org.nz) or www.nzmga.org.nz.

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Objectives

International benchmark

The NZMGA is a member of the IFMGA and draws on the international benchmark of the [IFMGA Common Platform](#)¹ in the development of its Training and Certification Programme. The Common Platform includes minimum prerequisites, number of training and work experience days.

The NZMGA Training and Certification Programme describes the standards and practices of the NZMGA training pathways. Its objectives are to offer those who work or wish to work as professional guides in the mountains a practical training programme. Through certification, the programme promotes accepted standards for movement on snow, ice and rock in the core disciplines of trekking, climbing and skiing. Generic to all disciplines are the skills and knowledge required of guides as independent leaders. These include successful management of guide/client relationships, assessment and reduction of risk, avalanche hazard forecasting and emergency procedures.

Mountain guiding and assessment

Mountain guiding is a serious profession. Before considering guide training, Applicants should serve a personal apprenticeship in the mountains and be skilled in their chosen pursuit. Mountain guiding involves several disciplines. Every day of guiding will vary according to terrain, weather, the discipline at hand (alpine, rock, ice, ski or trekking), client ability, fitness and ambition, guide ability and fitness, the objective risk present, prior planning and preparation, familiarity with the terrain and the experience levels of both guide and client. Guides should accept risk while striving to reduce it by total awareness of the mountain environment.

Although several guides may be working in a similar venue, the choices and decisions they make may vary according to the factors just described as well as other, more subtle variables - for example risk tolerance of both guest and guide. Mountain and ski guiding requires a continuous system of judgement and decision making as well as adjustment to ever-changing mountain and client conditions. Guiding demands a complex balance of physical and mental skills.

The training and assessment of prospective mountain guide Candidates requires versatility by Trainers and Assessors and recognition that the application of guiding techniques is rarely prescriptive. One guide may short-rope a piece of familiar terrain while another, fresh off a season of ski guiding, doesn't feel the same comfort on their crampons and chooses to pitch that same section of mountain. One guide may be gregarious, another quiet. One may be a strong ski guide while another climbs rock at a high level. There is no typical mountain guide. A broad situational awareness and an ability to react to changing conditions is critical, while executing smooth movement through the terrain and maintaining a friendly attitude.

¹ Appendix 2 - IFMGA Common Platform

Guide Training

Training Officer

The NZMGA Technical Subcommittee (TSC), coordinated by the Chair is responsible for the establishment of standards of competence applying to different guide training pathways. The TO and in some cases, the Administration Officer, will seek advice from the TSC on issues of technical policy around training. The TSC is also responsible for the ratification of course results.

The Committee appoints a Training Officer (TO) who is responsible for administering the NZMGA Training and Certification Programme. The TO is a paid executive position, an IFMGA guide and NZMGA Assessor who is responsible for assisting the entry of candidates into the various NZMGA pathways. The TO reviews applications and makes recommendations to both Candidates and the TSC.

Duties of the TO include:

- Answering queries regarding NZMGA courses, along with the Administrative Officer;
- Advising the Committee on the scheduling and running of NZMGA courses;
- Processing course applications to ensure that applicants meet course prerequisites, along with the Administrative Officer. If there is any doubt that an applicant meets course prerequisites, the decision is at the TSC's discretion on the advice of the TO;
- Providing a list of eligible participants to the appointed course director;
- Maintaining a waitlist of course applicants in case of cancellations or postponements;
- Application and continuous improvement of Safety Management Systems (SMS);
- Providing logistical support to course directors;
- Advising the TSC on the ratification of all course results and changes of a guide's status.

Categories of guide

IFMGA Mountain and Ski Guide is the highest level of professional mountain guiding qualification available in NZ and aligns with the international benchmark of the IFMGA Common Platform.

Many IFMGA member countries have specialist guides. In New Zealand, a guide may specialise as a Climb (alpine and rock) Guide or a Ski Guide². Guides in training on the IFMGA pathway complete both specialist discipline pathways.

The NZMGA also includes two other specialty disciplines for mountain guiding. The Alpine Trekking Guide (ATG) and the Hard Ice Guide (HIG) for lower glacier guiding.

There are specific terrain and supervision requirements for all specialist Guides. Refer to *NZMGA Professional , Terrain and Supervision Guidelines* for the terrain and supervision requirements.

Guides in Training	Qualified Guides
<p>NZMGA Aspirant Mountain Guide A member who has Assistant Guide status in both skiing and climbing disciplines.</p>	<p>IFMGA Mountain and Ski Guide A member who has passed both the NZMGA Ski Guide and NZMGA Climbing Guide Programmes to the international standard set by the IFMGA.</p>
<p>Assistant Guides NZMGA Assistant Ski Guide and Assistant Climbing Guide A member who has passed an NZMGA Guides Course Level 1 in either the skiing or climbing disciplines.</p>	<p>NZMGA Ski Guide A member who has passed the NZMGA Ski Guide Programme.</p> <p>NZMGA Climbing Guide A member who has passed the NZMGA Climbing Guide Programme.</p>
<p>NZMGA Assistant Alpine Trekking Guide A member who has passed a Level 1 Assessment Course in alpine trekking discipline.</p>	<p>NZMGA Alpine Trekking Guide A member who has passed Level 2 Assessment Course in alpine trekking discipline.</p>
<p>There is no NZMGA Assistant Hard Ice Guide status. See NZMGA HIG Memorandum of Understanding</p>	<p>NZMGA Hard Ice Guide A member who has passed a Level 2 Assessment Course in hard ice discipline.</p>

² IFMGA Member countries without a ski history (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Nepal), provide IFMGA status to what is essentially a specialty Climb Guide. The European Big 5 have not traditionally offered specialty disciplines but are beginning to consider it.

Pathway prerequisites

The NZMGA provides training pathways for IFMGA, Climb, Ski, Alpine Trekking and Hard Ice Guides. Before entering an NZMGA pathway, certain prerequisites must be met by the Applicant as part of the application process. These revolve around personal experience in the mountains and movement ability according to their speciality. The NZMGA needs to see a solid base of personal mountaineering skills, knowledge and experience from Applicants in their chosen discipline.

A logbook must be presented on application as proof that experience. Applicant logbooks must have exceeded the minimum prerequisites for their chosen pathway before being accepted as a Candidate for Entry Exams and Training Courses. The Training Officer may call references to verify the logbook.

Additionally, the Applicant must meet first aid and avalanche certifications.

Recognition of Prior Experience

The NZMGA training syllabus is constructed in a manner as to prepare prospective guides for the NZMGA examination process, such that a Candidate has the maximum opportunity of success.

A Candidate from any NZMGA guiding pathway that exceeds the personal prerequisites (majority in NZ) for that pathway can apply to the TSC for a possible exemption from one (ski/climb pathway) or two (IFMGA pathway) of the training courses. They will still require a positive recommendation from ONE training course before attending the first assessment course.

By being granted an exemption, the Candidate recognises:

- That they are wholly personally responsible for addressing any training shortfall that may arise from non-attendance of an NZMGA guide training course;
- That they are to make themselves entirely familiar with the NZMGA assessment criteria such that any training shortfall is identified;
- That the NZMGA is unable to make any specific recommendations in addressing a training shortfall as the result of an exemption;
- They will not hold the NZMGA responsible, regardless of the outcome, on assessment topics that were not demonstrated at a satisfactory level in an assessment situation as a result of any training shortfall.

Whilst an exemption from training absolves the candidate of the requirement to attend the outlined training course, if at any point the candidate deems that it is in their best interests to attend, an exemption does not exclude a candidate from attending the training course, should they determine on personal review that it is in their best interests to do so.

Exam / Training Course	Exemption criteria
Avalanche Risk Management Level 5	This course must be at least seven days long, cover an introduction to snow pack and weather observations, snow metamorphism, snow mechanics, terrain analysis, avalanche terrain travel skills, stability and hazard analysis, and avalanche rescue. Overseas equivalent courses may be accepted as an equivalent, subject to ratification by the TSC.
Avalanche Risk Management Level 6	Overseas equivalent courses may be accepted as an equivalent, subject to ratification by the TSC.
Technical Ski Exam	A successful pass on the Personal skiing evaluation section of the NZSIA Stage 2 Course. Overseas equivalent courses may be accepted as an equivalent pass to a Technical Ski Course, subject to ratification by the TSC.
Rock Exam	NZOIA Rock 2
Ski Guide Training	Avalanche 2, a minimum 4 quality supervised days ³ and letter(s) of recommendation ⁴ from a NZMGA Ski or IFMGA guide.
Rock Guide Training	NZOIA Rock 2, a minimum of 4 quality supervised days and letter(s) of recommendation from a NZMGA Climb or IFMGA guide.
Snow and Ice Guides Training	2 or more seasons with Aoraki Mount Cook SAR, a minimum of 4 quality supervised days and letter(s) of recommendation from a NZMGA Climb or IFMGA guide. NZOIA Alpine 2, a minimum of 4 quality supervised days and letter(s) of recommendation a NZMGA Climb or IFMGA guide.

³ Quality Supervised Days

These can be in an observation role, co-guiding or in a training scenario. They need to be sufficiently documented to provide a record of the assignment, the candidate's own learning points, supervisor's feedback and specific observations of the candidate's performance and competencies related to the guide training programme (refer to training syllabus).

⁴ Letters of Recommendation

These should attest to specific observations of a Candidate's current skills and experience, identifying any learning gaps along with a plan to address these gaps (refer to training syllabus).

Training timeline leave and extensions

Positive recommendations from **training courses are valid for 2 years**. If a Level 1 assessment course is not attended during this time the training course must be re-attended or the Candidate may apply to the TSC for an extension (see below).

Candidates on all training pathways have **5 years to complete their chosen pathway**. This starts from the date of their first assessment course.

Candidates can apply for a specific period of leave from their training timeline for situations such as full-time study, parental leave or other 'valid' reasons. Refer to ***NZMGA Lapsed Member Policy***.

For matters not covered in the Lapsed Member Policy, a guide in training may apply to the TSC for an extension to their 5-year training period due to specific unforeseen circumstances. The extension request must be prior to the closing date of the last opportunity to sit a level 2 assessment within the 5-year period.

Applications are to be sent to the TO and the following documentation must be included with the application:

- Logs and logbook summary of all work undertaken since achieving Assistant status;
- Full and detailed reason(s) for the extension request along with supporting documentation (doctor's letter/certificate, job offer etc).
- An achievable Action Plan to complete the pathway in a timely manner (the emphasis will still be on the 5 years). Action Plans should include milestones that, if not achieved, trigger an opportunity for the TSC to withdraw approval and the projected date for attending the relevant level 2 Assessment course. This requires the candidate to keep the TO up to date with their progress during the extension period.

Changing training pathway

If a Candidate begins down a single discipline pathway (ATG, Ski or Climb) and decides to change to the IFMGA pathway, they can apply to the TO to change pathway.

Candidates still have 5 years from the date of their first pathway Assessment Course to complete the IFMGA pathway unless an application is made to the TSC for an extension to the training timelines (see above). If this is not done and the total training timeline extends beyond 5 years, Candidates may still achieve full NZMGA Climb and Ski status but won't receive IFMGA status.

Transcripts from previous Training and/or Assessment Courses will be reviewed by the TO as part of the application to change pathways. This application needs to address any course failures with evidence on how they have since been addressed. In these instances, applications will be reviewed by the TSC.

Apprenticeship

The NZMGA employs an apprenticeship model to the training of mountain guides. Unusual to other IFMGA countries, the NZMGA examines both Level 1 and Level 2 guides at the same time. This gives the advantage of level 2 guides having the opportunity to model to level 1 guides under the tutelage of the Assessors.

Supervised Work Experience

Supervised work experience is an important and integral part of the Training and Certification Programme. To apply for a Level 2 Assessment Course in a Candidate's chosen pathway, certain supervised work experience requirements must be met. Details of the prerequisite work experience for Level 2 courses are provided in the Guide Pathways below.

NZMGA expects all guides in training to work within the **NZMGA Professional, Terrain and Supervision Guidelines** and accordingly to keep a logbook for guiding assignments, supervision and feedback.

Level 2 course representation policy

In order to represent for a Level 2 Assessment Course following a previous failure of the same assessment, the Candidate must:

- Submit logbook pages of all guiding undertaken since the prior application;
- List all training and private climbing or skiing undertaken since the course;
- Supply one new letter of recommendation from an IFMGA or NZMGA Climb or Ski Guide acknowledging that the applicant has developed and demonstrated the appropriate skills directly relating to their feedback. Ideally this guide will have directly supervised the candidate since the course;
- Supply a current letter outlining what action(s) they personally have taken to address the specific concerns outlined in their course transcript.

There is an 18-month time limit on representation for level 2 assessment. Candidates must ensure the above documentation is into the Administration Officer at least 3 months prior to your intended course participation.

Trainer and Assessor appointments

Guides who train and assess other guides are expected to be role models, demonstrating outstanding skill and professionalism as well as have the ability to evaluate guiding techniques demonstrated by candidates. Additionally, trainers seek to effectively educate and give feedback with the aim of expanding the candidate's knowledge of tricks and techniques.

The TSC with recommendations from the TO appoints Trainers and Assessors in accordance with the **NZMGA Assessor Criteria Policy**. This provides a robust process for mentoring new Assessors into the Assessor Pool, appointing Assessors to courses and rotating Assessors to allow different Assessors to work together.

In summary the policy requires that all Trainers and Assessors must have:

- Held the highest qualification available for the particular pathway [discipline] for at least two years;
- Have had a minimum of 200–300 days practical guiding experience in that pathway;
- Previously been an Assistant Assessor on the same type of course before being eligible to direct.

Externally Provided Prerequisites

The following prerequisite national qualifications are provided externally and are required for Candidates of NZMGA training pathways.

Avalanche Risk Management (Level 5)

The Avalanche Risk Management (ARM) (Level 5)⁵ qualification is a prerequisite for a number of NZMGA guiding pathways. This course provides the first level of professional training available, enabling participants to work in all sectors of the avalanche industry.

For more information refer to the current providers of this qualification:

- [Otago Polytechnic](#) (Short and Semester courses)
- [Mountain Education Centre](#) (Certificate in Ski Patrol - Tai Poutini Polytechnic) (Semester course)

Avalanche Risk Management (Level 6)

The Avalanche Risk Management (ARM) (Level 6)⁶ qualification is a prerequisite for Level 2 courses for the Climb, Ski and IFMGA pathways and is recommended professional development for all guides. This is the highest level of professional training available in NZ

For more information refer the only current provider of this qualification is [Otago Polytechnic](#).

Advanced Outdoor First Aid

A 40 hour outdoors/remote orientated first aid qualification is a prerequisite for all NZMGA guiding pathways.

Previously Prehospital Emergency Care (PHEC) was recognised as the standard first aid qualification for outdoor professionals. In 2020/21 this qualification was being received and might change in the future. All holders of the PHEC qualification are recommended to attend a refresher every 2 years to maintain currency.

Syllabus should include:

- Patient assessment;
- Resuscitation - including oxygen therapy;
- Fracture and wound management;
- Multiple casualty management;
- Medical conditions;
- Shock advisory defibrillation;
- Patient transportation.

Recommended providers include:

- [Horizons](#) (Certificate in Outdoor Emergency Care)

⁵ This course replaces Avalanche Stage 1 from 2018

⁶ This course replaces the Diploma in Avalanche Studies (which incorporated Stage 2) from 2019

Guide Pathways

Hard Ice Guide

Hard Ice Guides are qualified to work on the lower, hard ice areas of glaciers. Their work encompasses guided walking trips, instruction and ice climbing. Clients may have little experience and be guided in large groups on maintained tracks or 'free guiding'

The NZMGA only administers Level 2 Assessment Courses for Hard Ice Guides. Level 1 assessment of Hard Ice Guides is carried out internally by companies who have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NZMGA⁷. The Assistant Hard Ice Guide status is therefore an internal company qualification, these guides are not full members of the Association and it is only valid whilst the guide is employed by that particular company (not transferable).

Hard Ice Guide (Level 2) Prerequisites

To be allocated a place on a Alpine Trekking Guide Level 2 Assessment Course, Candidates must have met the following criteria:

- Achieved Assistant Hard Ice Guide whilst being employed by a company signed up to the NZMGA MOU;
- Completed 100 days guiding work (over at least two seasons) on lower hard ice glacial areas under the supervision of an NZMGA Hard Ice, Climb or IFMGA Guide;
- Provide a letter of verification from the employer or Chief Guide of the 100 days logged guiding work at time of assessment. The Association also requests that the written logbook (signed by supervisor/s) be retained by the applicant to be presented for sighting and examination. 15 of these days must be under the direct supervision of an NZMGA Hard Ice, Climb or IFMGA Mountain Guide;
- Hold an **Advanced First Aid** qualification (or equivalent, see *Externally Provided Prerequisites*).

⁷ See NZMGA Hard Ice Guide Memorandum of Understanding

Alpine Trekking Guide

Alpine Trekking Guides (ATGs) are able to lead trekking groups through non-technical trekking terrain - bush, subalpine, max grade I (new Mount Cook guide book grading) (where permanent or seasonal snow may be encountered).

They may also be under supervision, guide technical trekking terrain, including “easy” glaciated neve trekking terrain, as well as suitable hard ice areas of lower glaciers.

The use of learnt, trained and assessed guiding techniques for such trekking, as per the NZMGA training and assessment scheme, could/will be used, and the basic skills of alpinism may be required. These include: use of ice axe, self-arrest and crampon techniques

Some examples of non-technical trekking terrain (where, in general, rope guiding techniques would not be expected/required) are:

- Three Pass trip (Arthurs Pass);
- Mueller Hut, Mt Wakefield, Mt Sebastopol, Sefton Biv (AMCNP)
- Cascade Saddle, up to Brewster Glacier, (Mount Aspiring National Park);
- Five Pass trip, Gertrude saddle (Mt Aspiring/Fiordland National park)

Technical Trekking Terrain

Technical Trekking Terrain is where the use of the rope is included in guiding techniques (expected), including “easy”* neve glacier terrain.

[* Non-technical glacier neve where a guide ropes up clients in glacier mode, and walks them up or down glacier expecting the terrain and route to be reasonably flat or low angle, route finding straightforward, not expecting to negotiate challenging bergschrunds or not traversing ice falls (yes, stopping to take photos of such features as picturesque seracs from a safe position)]

It is expected that the guide enters into the intended spirit of these terrain guidelines to reflect their basic training and experience of such terrain. If their clients wish to explore more technical or challenging terrain, a NZMGA climb or IFMGA guide should be engaged.

Technical trekking terrain requires supervision of ATG guides by either NZMGA Climb or IFMGA Guides

Activity providers may develop Site Specific SOPs for their terrain that encompasses technical trekking terrain.

The NZMGA very much supports a program where an ATG first works under direct supervision at a particular Technical Trekking Terrain site. Then, they may continue to work under the indirect supervision of an IFMGA Mountain or NZMGA Climb Guide.

Guidance for Supervising/Chief Guides:

Examples of technical trekking terrain suitable for a well site trained and supervised NZMGA Alpine Trekking Guide is:

- Neve walk/trekking in summer from Tasman Glacier Kelman landing zone or upper neve landing zone, and trek down glacier to aircraft pick up.
- Ball Pass
- Pioneer Hut to Pioneer Pass
- Overnight to Plateau Hut and gentle neve walk onto Grand Plateau.
- Chancellor Dome
- Barron Saddle exit via lower glacier route
- Brewster Glacier to Mt Top Heavy
- Mtns Ruapehu, Tongariro, Taranaki
- Rabbit pass

Technical Terrain conditions for ATG changes daily, seasonally and annually, significantly changing the hazards and technical difficulties. On the ground supervision and assessment of conditions is vital.

Alpine Trekking Guide Pathway (Level 1) prerequisites

Applicants for the Alpine Trekking Guide pathway must also hold **Avalanche Risk Management Level 5 or 6** and an **Advanced First Aid** qualification (or equivalent, see *Externally Provided Prerequisites*).

Applicants must present for consideration to the TO an alpine trekking Logbook that covers a minimum of 3 years of summer and winter seasons in New Zealand.

The Logbook should exceed the following minimum criteria:

Criteria	Guidelines	Example routes
30 alpine trekking days	Experience outside of New Zealand will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Cover a minimum of 3 separate geographical mountain regions. Must show depth of experience, i.e. valley to summit, trans-alpines (trips incorporating multiple pass crossings) river crossing and off track experience. NZMGA Hard Ice Guide qualification may stand in for some of these alpine trekking days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brewster glacier; ● Rabbit Pass; ● Darrans; ● 5 Passes (Arthurs Pass); ● 5 Passes (Mt Aspiring NP); ● Tongariro NP;
At least 10 routes or ascents of Aoraki Mount Cook seriousness grade I.		
At least 6 routes or ascents of Aoraki Mount Cook seriousness grade II routes or above	Includes ascents of major NZ peaks.	

Alpine Trekking Guide (Level 2) Prerequisites

To be allocated a place on a Alpine Trekking Guide Level 2 Assessment Course, Candidates must have met the following criteria:

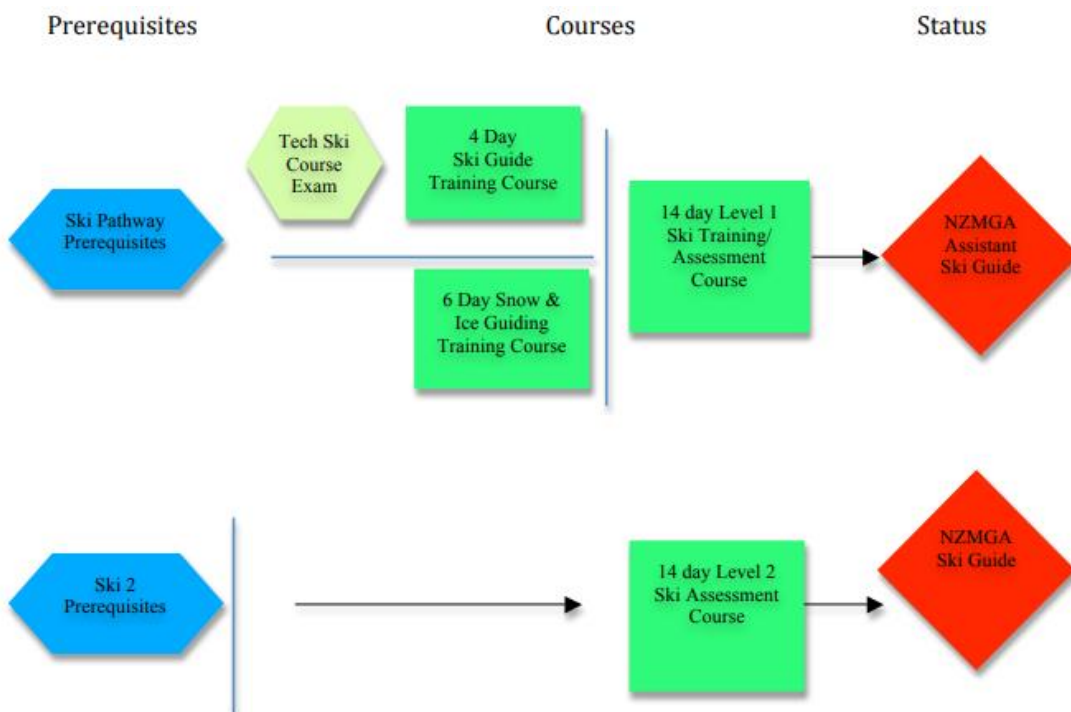
- Completed at least 15 days of supervised alpine trekking guiding work since attaining Assistant Alpine Trekking Guide status. A logbook must be submitted with the application for evidence;
- Minimum 5 quality directly supervised days alpine trekking guiding work;
- Minimum 10 quality indirectly supervised days alpine trekking guiding work;
- Supervisor must be an NZMGA Alpine Trekking Guide, NZMGA Climb Guide or IFMGA Mountain Guide according to **NZMGA Professional, Terrain and Supervision Guidelines**.
- **Avalanche Risk Management (Level 6)** is not a required prerequisite but recommended for fully qualified Alpine Trekking Guides involved in the supervision of assistant guides.

Ski Guide

NZMGA Ski Guides are able to lead all skiing and snowboard activities in New Zealand, including ascents of non-technical peaks (no harder than grade Seriousness II, Technical 1⁸ in normal winter/spring conditions), as part of a ski tour.

Non-technical ski peaks are such that in normal conditions they can be ascended mostly on skins. For short sections client(s) may be safeguarded by belaying, lowering, the use of a fixed line or short roping (1 or 2 clients at a time). Non-technical peaks do not require multi-pitch climbing techniques.

Splitboarders shall be able to complete NZMGA Ski Guides pathway while completing the entire program on their boards and without being tested on skis. They will have to pass a one-day technical riding exam. During all other training and assessment courses, Splitboarders will have to demonstrate the same guiding skills as skiers both on and off their boards. Their uphill travel mode will have to be via skins. No snowshoes will be allowed. Splitboarders will not be able to be awarded IFMGA status unless they complete a Ski 2 exam on skis.



⁸ All grading refers to the two-tier (seriousness/technical) NZ mountaineering grades. For further information refer to Aoraki/Tai Poutini: A Guide For Mountaineers (2018)

Ski Guide Pathway (Level 1) Prerequisites

Applicants for the ski guide pathway must also hold **Avalanche Risk Management Level 5 or 6** and an **Advanced Outdoor First Aid** qualification (or equivalent see *Externally Provided Prerequisites*).

Applicants must present for consideration to the TO a ski touring and ski mountaineering logbook which includes a minimum of three seasons winter backcountry skiing or ski mountaineering, of which at least 2 full seasons must be in New Zealand.

The Logbook should exceed the following minimum international standard:

Criteria	Guidelines	Example routes
30 quality ski tour days	Each day having at least 1000m ascent/descent. 15 must have been on glaciated terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fritz range traverse, Westland NP; ● Symphony on Skis; ● Craigieburn Range traverse; ● Remarkables Range traverse
10 days of winter ski mountaineering of grade 1 (/II) (A/MC) peaks	Demonstrate competency in the use of crampons, rope and ice axe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Single Cone, Remarkables; ● Mt Von Burlow; ● Chancellor Dome; ● Grey Peak; ● Mt Sealy; ● Hochstetter Dome; ● Drummond Peak; ● Mt Edgar Thompson
Minimum 2 ski mountaineering ascents of minimum grade 2 (/III) (A/MC) peaks in winter	Includes ascents of major NZ peaks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lendenfeld Peak; ● Elie de Beaumont; ● Minarets; ● Hamilton; ● Mt Bannie etc.

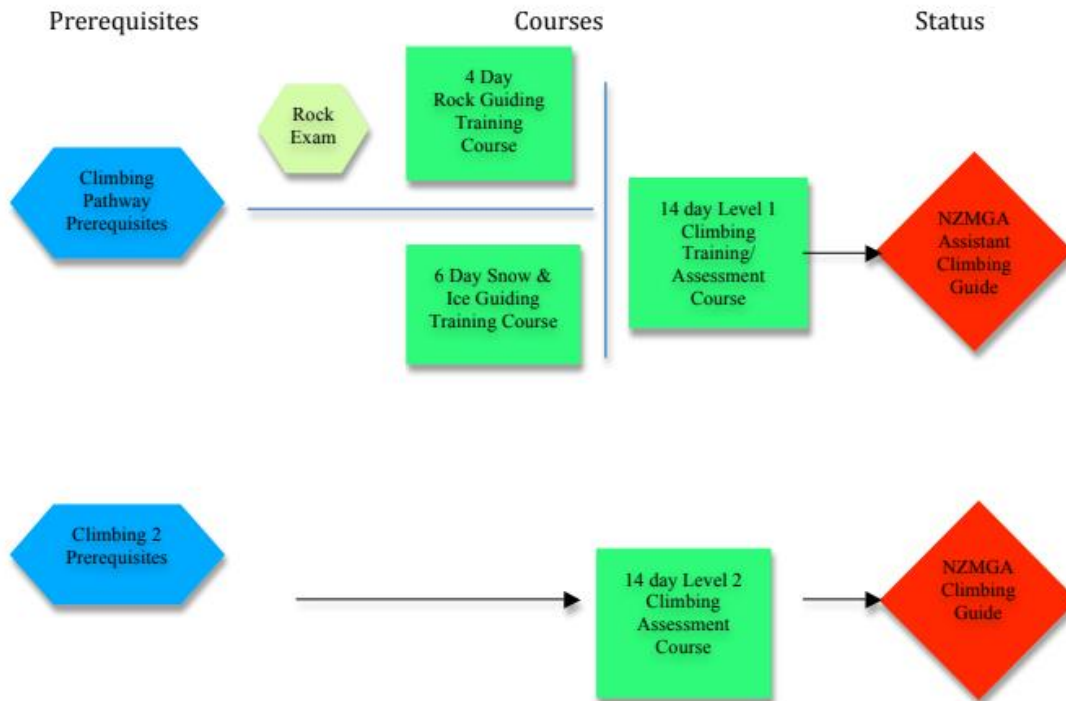
Ski Guide (Level 2) Prerequisites

To be allocated a place on a Ski Guide Level 2 Assessment Course, Candidates must have met the following criteria:

- Completed 30 days of supervised ski guiding work over at least 2 seasons since attaining Assistant Ski Guide status. At least 10 days of the supervised work requirement must be completed in New Zealand. A logbook must be submitted with the application for evidence and should include a diverse range of work and geographical areas including glaciated areas;
- At least 7 of the 30 days must have been under direct supervision. Supervisor must be an NZMGA Ski Guide or IFMGA Mountain Guide according to **NZMGA Professional, Terrain and Supervision Guidelines**. Three of these days must be ski touring under direct supervision.
- The application must include written recommendation from two NZMGA Guides who have supervised the Candidate in the previous 12 months, one of which must be an IFMGA Guide;
- Achieved **Avalanche Risk Management Level 6** (or equivalent).

Climb Guide

NZMGA Climb Guides can lead all climbing and mountaineering activities in New Zealand where skiing is not the main objective. Climbing Guides have the guiding and instructional skills needed to work in alpine rock, snow, and ice terrain, in both summer and winter.



Climb Guide Pathway (Level 1) Prerequisites

Applicants for the NZMGA Climb Guide pathway must also hold **Avalanche Risk Management Level 5 or 6** and an **Advanced outdoor First Aid** qualification (or equivalent, see *Externally Provided Prerequisites*).

Applicants must present for consideration to the NZMGA Training Officer (TO), a mountaineering logbook which includes a minimum of three seasons' active mountaineering in both winter and summer.

The Logbook should exceed the following minimum international standard:

Criteria	Guidelines	Example routes
<p>10 mixed snow/ice routes including the following (A/MC) grades: 5 x grade 3 /III 3 x grade 4 2x grade 5 5 x grade IV of which 2 must have a technical grade of 5</p>	<p>Includes ascents of major NZ peaks, five of which must be over 3000m and height gain of at least 800m. These routes must be serious alpine undertakings with you in a leadership or shared leadership role. Descent is preferably by another route and not a continuous rap descent. Logbooks should show dates and partners (contact addresses may be required for verification). Some overseas routes are acceptable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Central Gully, Douglas Peak (IV, 5); ● North Shoulder Tasman (IV, 3); ● East Face Walter (IV, 5); ● South Face of Hicks (III-V); ● East Ridge, North Ridge Aoraki/Mount Cook (V, 3+); ● South Face Nazomi (V); ● Central Spur, Elie Du Beaumont (V, 4+); ● West Ridge, Tasman (V, 4)
<p>10 alpine rock routes: Approx 10 pitches, crux grade >13 Ewbank and at least 250m vertical</p>	<p>Routes can be climbed either in mountain boots or a combination of mountain boots and rock shoes and must be protected in part by traditional protection. Routes must be of 'alpine' character in mountainous terrain and/or on glaciers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moir's Mate, North Buttress of Sabre, etc. The Darrans; ● 'DB'Eh', etc. The Remarkables; ● 'Butterfly Buttress' etc. South Temple; ● Ben Ohau Range, including Twin Stream; ● 'Moonshine Buttress', 'Kahu', etc. Fox Neve etc; ● Balfour Glacier routes; ● Temple Buttress, Arthurs Pass.
<p>Minimum 3 multi-pitch ice or mixed routes of grade WI 4 and/or M4 or higher</p>	<p>Routes with low seriousness/commitment but with higher technical grade, 'cragging' style routes with straightforward or abseil descents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Black Peak, Wye Creek and Bush Stream; ● 'Friday's Fool', etc. The Remarkables; ● Temple Basin, Arthurs Pass; ● Barnicoat, Mallory etc. Fox Neve; ● Homer Tunnel region etc., The Darrans.
<p>Multi-pitch rock climbing minimum 18/19 Ewbank (if not included in above routes)</p>	<p>Evidence of approximately 100 days or 1000 sport and traditionally protected pitches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chinaman's Bluff; ● Mt Somers; ● Long Beach/Lovers Leap; ● North Wye; ● Wanaka; ● Australia.
<p>Any overseas trekking, mountaineering or rock climbing expeditions</p>		
<p>Other relevant alpine climbing/training</p>		<p>SAR, Ski Patrol</p>

Climb Guide (Level 2) Prerequisites

To be allocated a place on a Climb Guides Level 2 Assessment Course, Candidates must have met the following criteria:

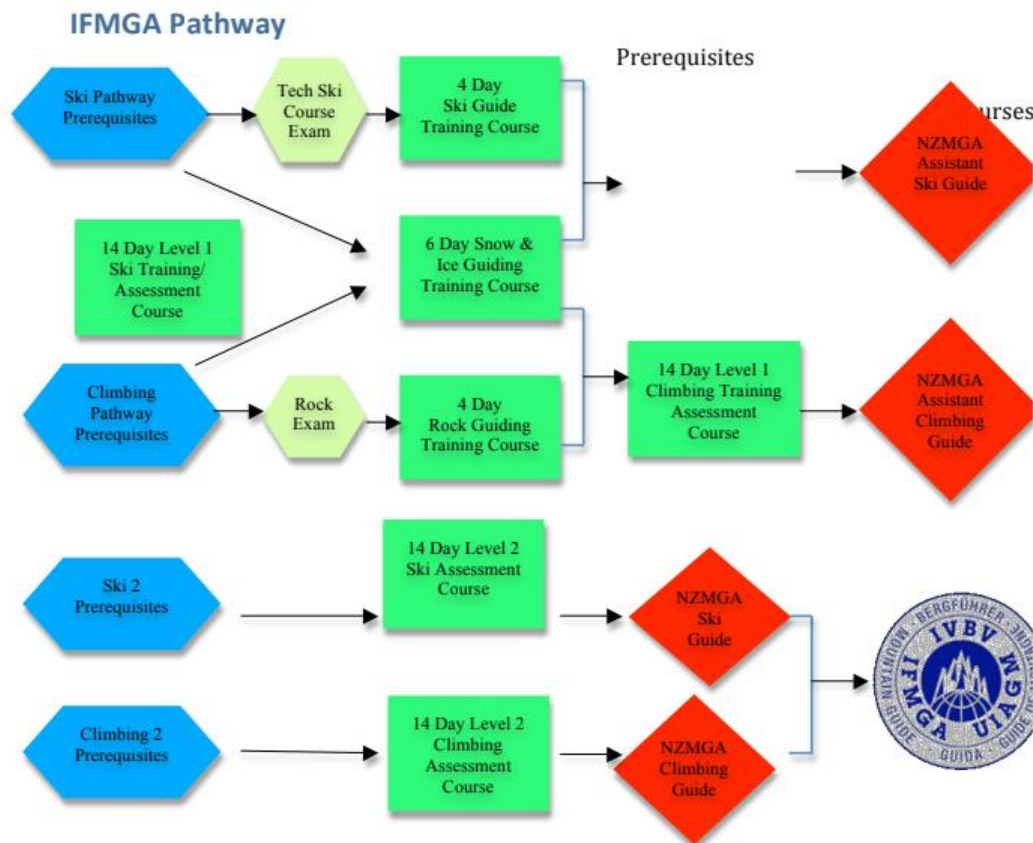
- Completed 30 days supervised climbing guiding work over a minimum of two years must have been worked since Assistant Climb Guide status has been granted. 15 of the 30 days must have taken place in New Zealand A logbook must be submitted with the application for evidence and should include a diverse range of work and geographical areas including technical rock climbing guiding and ascents of significant peaks;
- At least 7 of the 30 days must have been under direct supervision. Supervisor must be an NZMGA Climb Guide or IFMGA Mountain Guide according to ***NZMGA Professional, Terrain and Supervision Guidelines***. Three of these days must be ascents under direct supervision;
- The application must include written recommendation from two NZMGA Guides who have supervised the Candidate in the previous 12 months, one of which must be an IFMGA Guide;
- Achieved **Avalanche Risk Management Level 6** (or equivalent).

IFMGA Mountain and Ski Guide

There are no specific terrain limitations for IFMGA Mountain and Ski Guides except those imposed by personal or experience limitations.

As new activities emerge, IFMGA Mountain Guides should be able to document their experience before involving clients in such activities.

This is the highest level of qualification awarded by the NZMGA and is the only mountain guide qualification recognised throughout all IFMGA nations.



IFMGA Mountain and Ski Guide Prerequisites

To gain IFMGA status through the NZMGA, a candidate must meet the following requirements:

- Achieved NZMGA Ski Guide status (having completed the level 2 assessment on skis);
- Achieved NZMGA Climbing Guide status;
- A maximum of five years elapsed since the first Assessment Course (Climb or Ski) and final (Climb or Ski) Assessment Course .

Entry Exams

Entry exams are a requirement for Candidates for the specialist Climb, Ski and the IFMGA pathways before attending Training Courses in accordance with the IFMGA Common Platform.

Deferments

Assessors on Entry Exams may grant a deferment to a Candidate to who did not pass the exam in order to complete subsequent Training Courses. This would only be in a case where the Candidate:

- Came extremely close to the mark for technical climbing/skiing ability as specified in the Entry Exam Marking Schedule;
- Had a very strong pass in all other marked topics of the exam;
- Was deemed competent and safe enough to attend the subsequent Training Course.
- If a deferment was to be granted the candidate: Could seek reassessment at a later time, at their own cost by an approved NZMGA Examiner and would need that Examiner's recommendation to apply to their Level 1 Assessment(s).

Rock Exam

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
1 day	All year	1:4	Wanaka, Queenstown, Dunedin, Darrans, Christchurch etc.

The Rock Exam is open to all Candidates that have been accepted for the Climb or IFMGA Guide pathways.

This is an assessment of technical rock skills, knowledge and rock climbing ability. It covers a variety of routes and climbing styles. The Assessor will be looking at competent and safe personal rock climbing on traditional and bolt protected routes and general movement skills at a standard that will enable successful participation in the Rock Guide Training and Climb Guide Level 1 Assessment.

At the end of the assessment, the Assessor will provide a summary of strengths and needed improvements.

Participants are required to climb:

- Grade 20 on traditional protection;
- Onsight or redpoint grade 21 or more sport climb;
- Grade 14 in mountain boots with an appropriate stocked guiding pack.

Prime importance is placed on:

- Climbing with efficiency of movement and technique;
- Climbing with ability to read terrain;
- Displaying evidence of rock climbing mileage and experience;
- Maintaining safety of themselves and other team members in ropework and belay techniques.

Examination topics

Rock climbing movement

- 1.1 Climb with efficiency of movement and technique with understanding of use of momentum, use of arms/shoulders, leg positions and footwork. Awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses.
- 1.2 Demonstrate and leverage finger strength, endurance, flexibility and core strength.
- 1.3 Understand training strategies and coaching for rock climbing movement and strength.

Traditional climbing

- 2.1 Select an appropriate route. Ability to read the route from the ground and plan tactics for the climb including racking up, down climbing, resting etc.
- 2.2 Resource selection and placement of appropriate traditional protection and anchors considering protection of leader, client security and confidence, and client comfort and enjoyment
- 2.3 Equalising multi-point bolt and traditional protection anchors for top rope, bottom rope and multi-pitch.
- 2.4 Demonstrate good stance management and efficient ropework for multi-pitch climbing and abseiling.

Sport climbing

- 3.1 Efficient and safe clipping of quickdraws.
- 3.2 Demonstrate knowledge of modern belay techniques and devices including fall factors, dynamic belaying etc.
- 3.3 Safe and efficient threading of top anchors for lower off or abseil.
- 3.4 Demonstrate sport climbing tactics for redpoint climbing including reading the route, applying visualisation and taking safe leader falls.

Multi-pitch rock climbing

- 4.1 Demonstrate solutions for suitable multi-pitch anchors including belaying techniques for teams of 2 and 3.
- 4.2 Demonstrate stance and rope management for multi-pitch in a team or 2 or 3.
- 4.3 Demonstrate multi-pitch abseiling and lowering.
- 4.4 Demonstrate awareness of problem avoidance, and problem solving such as simple raises, direct belay to lower transition etc.

Technical Ski Exam

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
1 day	Early winter	1:6	Within or adjacent to ski area boundaries

The Technical Ski Exam is open to all Candidates that have been accepted for the Ski or IFMGA Guide pathways.

It is an assessment of personal skiing ability in a pass/fail situation. It covers off-piste skiing in difficult terrain and in a variety of challenging snow conditions. The Assessor will be looking at competent and safe skiing in all snow conditions and all terrain at a standard that will enable successful participation in a Ski Guide Level 1 Course and work as an Assistant Ski Guide. The TSE is to be completed on ski touring or splitboard equipment with an appropriately stocked guiding backpack.

At the end of the assessment, the Assessor will provide a summary of strengths and needed improvements.

Participants are required to ski:

- Competently and safely in all snow conditions and on all terrain;
- Short, medium, and long radius turns rhythmically and at all speeds.

Prime importance is placed on:

- Continuity of turns;
- Speed control;
- Blending of skills to match situation;
- Balance;
- Technical consistency.

Participant notes:

1. Participants are to ski/ride with a backpack of equivalent heli-ski guide pack weight (7kg)
2. Course is held primarily within or adjacent to ski area boundaries - bring touring kit
3. Safety equipment to include: transceiver, shovel, probe, helmet
4. Safety checks of equipment include: transceiver, helmet, binding DIN settings
5. Participants to ensure they get to meeting point with sufficient time to sort passes, equipment etc - be aware of busy ski field roads, chain requirements and delays.

Examination topics

Each topic consists of a series of criteria. All criteria need to be passed to pass each topic. Falls and mistakes are only considered if they are due to a recurring technical problem as opposed to a one off error.

Free riding

- 1.1 Maintain a consistent turn radius as specified by the assessor.

- 1.2 Demonstrate a smooth transition from a series of long radius turns to short radius turns and back again.

- 1.3 Ability to emergency stop when riding at high speed.

- 1.4 Demonstrate linked pure carved turns.

Off-piste/steep/- difficult conditions

- 2.1 Linked short defensive turns maintaining constant control on slope over 45 degrees.

- 2.2 Maintain control and consistent progress in difficult conditions (including, but not limited to breakable crust, ice, avalanche debris, etc).

- 2.3 Linked turns in confined terrain including, but not limited to, chutes, gullies, couloirs, etc.

- 2.4 Move at high speed through difficult but appropriate terrain/conditions.

Situational performance

- 3.1 Participants demonstrate a high level of riding endurance throughout the day by maintaining control and pace, i.e. continuous riding and uphill fitness.

- 3.2 Judgement demonstrated in moving through unrideable terrain (e.g. kick turns in steep terrain, safe removal of gear, etc).

- 3.3 Judgement demonstrated on jumps and obstacles in steep terrain.

Training Courses

Training courses are provided to teach Candidates guiding techniques from highly experienced Trainers. They are not assessments of these guiding techniques but Trainers will continually observe what are considered personal skills. The courses provide the opportunity for Trainers to demonstrate good guiding technique to Candidates, giving them something to emulate. When Candidates are in guiding roles, the Trainer's role is to instruct and coach including terrain analysis, suggesting techniques, pointing out anchors and planning ahead etc.

Training courses may not always be able to cover all the topics to the level of understanding that is required on Level 1 assessment. Topics may only be covered by brief discussion and focused instruction to fill in knowledge gaps. Training courses should be used as an opportunity for Candidates to steer their own ongoing training requirements in preparation for Assessment courses. Further details of the topics covered during NZMGA Training Courses is available in the ***NZMGA Mountain Guides Manual***.

Snow and Ice Guide Training Course

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
7 days	November - March	1:4	Glaciated region

The aim of the Snow and Ice Guides (SIG) Course is to take solid amateur mountaineering skills and knowledge and teach Candidates how to change/modify techniques, skills and knowledge into professional mountain and ski guiding techniques.

General assessment of the candidate's overall mountaineering skills will be done. A positive recommendation for their particular pathway is required for the candidate to be able to progress to their appropriate Level 1 Assessment Course.

Candidates may be asked to prepare a formal lecture to present on a topic relevant to their chosen pathway. This is not assessed but will provide an opportunity for feedback in preparation for an assessed lecture during subsequent Assessments.

The SIG course will always take place on foot and include a day dedicated to river crossing techniques.

Syllabus

For further information on topics refer to the **NZMGA Technical Syllabus**.

Topics		Key Skills
1	Preparation and planning	Trip design Logistics management
2	Communication with clients	Equipment checklists and checks Guide equipment checklists Client brief and communications Encouragement, being assertive when appropriate
6	Cooking and camp management	Working around other users Cooking & presentation standards Hygiene
7	Shelters and bivouacs	Planning & equipment selection
8	Application of guiding technique	Glacier travel with client(s) (rope lengths, tying off coils, brake knots) Short roping (1 and 2 clients on snow. Inline, independent 'V' methods. Handle options Short pitching/pitching on snow
11	Client safety	Personal and client safety
15	Personal equipment and knowledge	Snow stakes Crampons Ice axe/hammer
17	Leadership and decision making	Formulating and communicating plans Inspiring confidence Decision making
21	Snow and ice climbing	French technique considerations when guiding, especially short roping Short pitching/pitching on snow
22	Step cutting	Single line and double cut up and down Stance making Step plugging, reinforced steps, steps the night before
23	Belays on snow and ice	Snow and ice anchors Constructing anchor systems Belay techniques
24	Navigation	Efficient use of map, compass and GPS Navigation plan Route planning
26	Mountain weather	Weather theory Field observations
34	Crevasse extraction	Holding a roped crevasse fall Self rescue Assisted and unassisted hoists (2:1, 3:1, 6:1)
40	Field communications	Operational and emergency communication device options including strengths and weaknesses
41	Aircraft safety	Identifying safe landing and take-off areas Group management in and around aircraft
42	River crossing	Trip planning (weather, river levels, contingencies, equipment etc.) Crossing points (entry, exit, hydraulics, runout, flow, depth, emergency etc.) Crossing techniques (solo and group)

Ski Guide Training Course

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
4 days	Early winter	1:4	Non-glaciated terrain Backcountry terrain of Queenstown/Wanaka, Ohau or Aoraki/Mount Cook

The Ski Guide Training (SGT) course takes place on skis or splitboard and aims to take solid amateur backcountry ski touring skills and knowledge and teach the candidate how to change/modify techniques, skills and knowledge into professional ski guiding techniques.

Syllabus

For further information on topics refer to the ***NZMGA Analysis of Topics***.

Topics		Key Skills
2	Communication with clients	Briefings, boundaries, etc.
4	Terrain analysis	Identifying hazards (slide for life, crevasse etc.)
5	Pacing	Selecting and maintaining appropriate pace Maintaining comfort Planning stops
9	Group management	Spacing White-out skiing technique
10	Client control	Communication Planning Anticipation of problems
11	Client safety	Identifying hazards (slide for life, crevasse etc.) Personal and client safety
15	Personal equipment and equipment knowledge	Equipment Issues and problem solving (helmets, skis, bindings, skins, ski wax, etc.)
25	Snow safety	Hazard analysis, quick guiding tests. High hazard terrain selection and guiding.
34	Crevasse extraction	Spectra type ropes, improvised harness, ski anchor
36	Avalanche rescue and transceiver use	Transceiver briefings and search techniques
37	Heli-ski guiding	Heliski helicopter load/unload techniques
38	Downhill skiing	Management of the downhill run. Downhill ski techniques for clients (powder, breakable crust, firm/icy, heavy pack)
39	Laying of a skin track	Client friendly skinning track, Terrain analysis for such a skinning track, Skinning technique, turns - shuffle, kick into hill, kick facing out of hill, Glide, use of heel lifts

Rock Guide Training Course

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
4 days	Mid to late summer	1:3	Remarkables, Wanaka

The Rock Guide Training (RGT) course takes place in an alpine climbing venue in NZ which also offers multi-pitch rock climbing. Its focus is easy to moderate, semi-technical, but exposed terrain where guiding techniques can differ greatly from amateur climbing techniques.

Syllabus

The syllabus covers the application and transition between the techniques of multi-pitch rock guiding short roping, moving together, short-pitching, long-pitching, abseiling and lowering with single or multiple clients as well as the more general skills of movement, route-finding, anchor building and rock rescue.

For further information on topics refer to the **NZMGA Technical Syllabus**.

Topics		Key Skills
2	Communication with clients	Client briefings Climbing communication and calls Situational leadership Coaching and instruction
4	Terrain analysis	Route Finding Hazard identification and risk management Anticipation of security demands Access, descent, rock quality, ridges/faces, protection, anchors
8	Application of guiding technique	Client security progressions (unroped and roped) Short roping on rock (1 & 2 clients, ascent and descent) Simultaneous climbing Short pitching on rock (1 & 2 clients, ascent and descent, anticipation of rope lengths) Abseiling and lowering with clients (hitches, devices, techniques, passing a knot, rope management, backup) Co-guiding techniques Timely transitions (4th to 5th class, parallel and caterpillar)
10	Client control	Communication Planning Pacing Modelling/coaching
11	Client safety	Guide and client safety Anticipation and preventions of issues
14	Personal equipment and knowledge	Gear selection and checks (including protection, rope..)
18	Rope handling	Fluidity, neatness Techniques for shortening live rope for roped travel Understanding of roped client security options
19	Rock climbing	Technical multi-pitching on rock (1 & 2 clients using caterpillar and parallel techniques, belaying) Stance management (rope management, client positioning block leading, protecting anchor, PAS/rope)
20	Belays on rock	Situational anchor selection Running belays (terrain, traditional protection) Situational belay techniques for leader and second (hitches, devices),
33	Improvised cliff rescue	Load transfers Problem solving Improvised harnesses Raises (Counterweight, assisted, unassisted) Multi-pitch abseiling with passive victim (counterweight and tandem)

Assessment Courses

Hard Ice Guide Assessment

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
4 days	January - April	2:6	Fox, Franz or Tasman Glaciers

Participants will be assessed on their personal technical skills necessary for guiding and instructing on the lower, hard ice glacial areas on half or full day walking trips, heli hikes and ice climbing. They will be required to teach and supervise revision sessions and practical exercises. It is expected that only minimal training will need to be given.

Candidates are expected to have a full knowledge of the topics in the HIG Syllabus and may be assessed on any topic of the Syllabus at any stage. Refer to the Marking Schedule⁹ and the ***NZMGA Technical Syllabus***.

⁹ See Appendix 3 - Marking Schedules

Alpine Trekking Guide Assessment

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
6 days	Spring	2:6	Mix of glaciated and non-glaciated alpine terrain

The Alpine Trekking Guide Assessment Course assesses Candidates on the trekking guiding and technical movement and rope skills necessary to perform as an Alpine Trekking Guide.

Candidates are expected to have a full knowledge of the topics in the ATG Syllabus and may be assessed on any topic of the Syllabus at any stage. Refer to the Marking Schedule¹⁰ and the **NZMGA Technical Syllabus**.

Candidates should be prepared and capable to teach and supervise revision sessions and practical exercises. It is expected that only minimal training needs to be given in any topic.

¹⁰ See Appendix 3 - Marking Schedules

Ski Guide Assessment

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
14 days	September or October.	2:6	High alpine areas of the Southern Alps. Typical venues are Aoraki/Mt Cook, Westland, and Mount Aspiring.

Candidates will be assessed on their personal ski touring, ski mountaineering, skiing ability, and rope rescue techniques. Participants will be expected to be fully conversant with all topics taught on the Snow and Ice Guides Course and Ski Guide Training. They will need to be able to demonstrate basic instruction skills for teaching clients off-piste ski technique and supervise revision sessions and practical exercises of course topics.

Candidates are expected to have a full knowledge of the topics in the Ski Guide Syllabus and may be assessed on any topic of the Syllabus at any stage. Refer to the Marking Schedule¹¹ and the **NZMGA Technical Syllabus**.

Level 1

Level 1 Candidates should have very good personal ski touring and ski mountaineering skills and are assessed on their potential to be a Ski Guide. Successful Candidates are expected to have sufficient experience to safely guide clients and work under indirect supervision on heliski, and ski touring operations in glaciated terrain. They will have the ability to analyse terrain and snowpack for hazard and the leadership and communication skills to safely lead clients through the mountains.

It is expected that only minimal training will need to be given in any topic.

Level 2

Level 2 Candidates are expected to have a high standard of personal ski touring and ski mountaineering skills and be able to teach Level 1 Candidates guiding techniques. They should be able to demonstrate that they can take leadership roles in team situations and provide quality feedback to other course participants. This includes acting as lead guides for ski touring, heliski, and glacier skiing operations. Level 2 Candidates will usually be given assignments that are more technical and longer duration than those at level 1.

For Level 2 Candidates on the IFMGA Pathway, they should be considered a worthy ambassador for the NZMGA to any IFMGA country.

¹¹ See Marking Schedules

Climb Guide Assessment

Length	Timing	Ratio	Locations
14 days	Early December or late February/March	2:6	High alpine areas of the Southern Alps. Typical venues are Aoraki/Mt Cook, Westland, Mount Aspiring, and the Darrans.

Candidates will be assessed on their personal rock climbing, mountaineering and rope rescue techniques. They will be expected to be fully conversant with all topics taught on the Snow and Ice Guides Course and Rock Guide Training. They will need to be able to demonstrate basic instruction skills for teaching clients mountaineering and climbing techniques and supervise revision sessions and practical exercises of course topics.

Candidates are expected to have a full knowledge of the topics in the Climb Guide Syllabus and may be assessed on any topic of the Syllabus at any stage. Refer to the Marking Schedule¹² and the **NZMGA Technical Syllabus**.

Level 1

Level 1 Candidates should have very good technical climbing and mountaineering skills and are assessed on their potential to be a Climb Guide. Successful Candidates are expected to have sufficient experience to safely and competently guide a client on straightforward ascents and work under indirect supervision ascents and instruction courses in alpine terrain. They will have the ability to analyse terrain and snowpack for hazard and the leadership and communication skills to safely lead clients through the mountains.

It is expected that only minimal training will need to be given in any topic.

Level 2

Level 2 Candidates are expected to have a high standard of personal technical climbing and mountaineering skills and be able to teach and coach Level 1 Candidates guiding techniques. They should be able to demonstrate that they can take leadership roles in team situations and provide quality feedback to other course participants. This includes acting as lead guides for ascents and instruction in alpine and glaciated terrain.

For Level 2 Candidates on the IFMGA Pathway, the participant should be considered a worthy ambassador for the NZMGA to any IFMGA country.

¹² See Marking Schedules

Assessment Methodology

Analysis of Topics

The NZMGA has a total of 50 topics that are detailed in the **NZMGA Technical Syllabus**. These topics encompass virtually all guiding skills. Some topics will not apply to certain pathways and not marked within that pathway's Marking Schedule¹³. Some topics included in the course syllabus are not assessed.

The topics are grouped under the sections of:

- Client Care;
- Personal Skills and Knowledge;
- Instruction;
- Search and Rescue;
- Non-assessed topics.

Each topic is summarised under three headings:

- Key skills - Those skills which are particularly applicable to that topic;
- Demonstration - Ways in which the skills may be demonstrated for assessment on courses;
- Evaluation - The required level of competence in the topic.

¹³ See Marking schedule

Assessment of Candidates

The task of Assessors on NZMGA Assessment Courses is to gather evidence about the Candidates in order to come to a decision on their suitability to progress in their training pathway and endorse their ability to meet the requirements likely to arise in the guiding profession. The way that this is done is by providing the Candidates with assignments that replicate authentic guiding situations, and by asking questions of Candidates about what was going on during the task in order to debrief the Candidate's judgement. The Assessors are attempting to build up a picture of each Candidate based on their performance during these assignments as well as holistically including the important factors of judgement, decision making and stress management strategies.

New Zealand, with its variable weather, mountainous terrain and a smaller mountain community, favours shorter training courses and longer assessments. These assessments take place in the actual environment that guides will work, providing real and suitable challenges and avoiding contrived situations. The length of assessment allows observation of entrenched or repeatable rather than sampled behaviours and provides some time for improvement and coaching. Candidates are likely to perform under stress and fatigue at some point in the assessment which allows for a robust examination process with numerous opportunities for Candidates to perform in a variety of terrain and weather.

The number of topics assessed enables a wide variety of skills to be gauged as objectively as possible. This provides a fair, consistent (between courses and between students) and measurable result for Candidates. The marking schedule provides a large amount of data and Assessors need to demonstrate flexibility to get the maximum opportunity for assessment as they arise (e.g a sudden unexpected change in weather or finding useful ice when it's been scarce). This is what happens in regular guiding.

The measurement of performance is done in relation at the level they are being assessed ie with a realistic expectation that Candidates are at their particular stage of their guiding career without many years experience¹⁴. NZMGA Assessment courses will include a combination of Level 1 and 2 Candidates so different expectations will be placed. The result of this process is to develop guides who can work within their scope of practice and experience levels anywhere in the world.

Assessment methods

Assessors use a number of techniques to provide a robust assessment process. Formative assessment (ongoing, "informing" assessment) takes place during the activity. This feedback focuses on what has been learnt and understood so far. As a result, Assessors will need to be in the thick of the action observing, questioning to understand the Candidate's judgement (why), discussing amongst themselves and recording evidence .

Summative assessment (measures or "sums up") the candidate's performance in a particular task against the **Marking schedule**. Candidates are not in direct competition with each other. Every candidate has the potential to attain the standard. This can be used as a Benchmark (i.e., performance is judged as above or below a pass-fail standard) during feedback sessions.

Skills are assessed mainly during practical exercises which may be full-day guiding assignments, or shorter specific tasks. They are designed to create a favourable opportunity for a wide range of skills to be demonstrated and evaluated. Despite the duration of Assessments, there is some time pressure to observe all Candidates in all topics and depending on the opportunities that present themselves Candidates will need to be organised and prepared to perform.

Specific topics such as transceiver searches and crevasse rescue are done as a full group on a set day and are therefore easy to mark as candidates are timed in task completion.

Due to the many variables on the day, marking is given relative to the group rather than set criteria.

¹⁴ See Marking schedule

Topics like fitness, professionalism, camp management and guide fitness can be assessed on an ongoing basis as the opportunity presents and may not require the Candidate to be in the lead at the time. This does require Assessors to be constantly in evaluation mode throughout the day and to meet together often to check that each candidate is being assessed on each topic.

Field days

Field days, during which Candidates will guide their peers and Assessor(s) for a partial or full-day assignment, are a major component of NZMGA assessments. There is no typical day on an assessment course as vagaries of weather and conditions will dictate the assignments as per a normal day of guiding in New Zealand. A NZ guide always has a range of plans in order to adapt to the conditions. This ability to include a range of plans and adapt to changes are looked for on assessments. Assessors will also look for the recognition and resolution of small mistakes. Assessors will usually work apart for the day and return to base to discuss the day and what assignments to give for the following day/s. At the most basic level assessors are looking for candidates to demonstrate a day of safe guiding with effective flow from transition to transition. Candidates should clarify each task and clear up any potential ambiguity by being proactive with communication and management.

The Candidates are usually given their guiding assignments the night prior and will plan for the objective. As much as possible Assessors will attempt to give at least a half day assignment to the candidates, thus allowing a solid space in which to lead the group and complete an objective.

On the morning of the assignment the Candidate will be expected to brief the group on the plan, timing and possible contingencies. This will include a review of the weather and avalanche conditions and inform the rest of the group the plan. The leader prepares hot drinks for his/her group and organises group emergency gear.

During the day, the Candidate will lead and monitor their group, the conditions, while route finding toward the objective. The Assessor generally will remain near the front of the group or rope team in order to seek clarification from the Candidate as necessary. For Assessors there is always a balance between allowing the Candidate an opportunity to flow with the assignment vs the Assessor stepping in to teach or correct. For the most part, Assessors (particularly with level 2 Candidates) will remain quiet, saving feedback for the debrief later. Only if there is an obvious “teachable moment” which is best attended to immediately, or there is a potential safety issue, will Assessors step in to interrupt.

The Candidate in the lead is expected to continue in the guide role until informed that their assignment is over. As much as possible this will be upon the attainment of the set objective for that Candidate’s lead.

General feedback

A variety of methods may be used to provide useful, honest and timely feedback to Candidates. The Assessors will use a form of feedback that they feel is most appropriate to the occasion. Feedback will be given during the programme as soon as is reasonably possible following each assessment task. Types of feedback that may be used include:

- Self assessment and peer feedback¹⁵
- 1 on 1 (only assessor gives personal and immediate feedback);
- A mid course interview with both Assessors and each Candidate individually. This allows Candidate’s self-evaluation to be matched with the ongoing evaluation by the Assessors. This meeting aims to inform candidates of their progress and gives specific skills to work on for the rest of the course.
- During the second part of the course (usually after the mid-course debrief) level 1 Candidates will be expected to show that they are developing an understanding of guiding techniques and have sufficient amateur climbing skills to integrate these techniques into simulated guiding assignments.

¹⁵ See below

Self and Peer feedback

The Self and Peer¹⁶ feedback technique is fundamental to the NZMGA assessment system and has been in use since 1988. It is a suitable and positive means of assessment when several people are affected by what the candidate for assessment does, for example, running an instruction session or managing two clients on a guiding day.

This technique encourages Candidates to reflect, self analyse and think critically. Developing good processes for reflection is important for NZ guides as they are often working in isolation. All Candidates can provide feedback, for example on how it felt to be guided by the Candidate being reviewed. A critique given by a peer can be more powerful and is not just the opinion of the Assessor. It emphasises soft skills - transparency, communication, responsive, approachable and tests judgement.

Another important advantage is that it allows learning and improvement to take place so that an assessor can see who is adapting to the guiding/instructing environment. Consistently using this method means that candidates have an opportunity to recognise their mistakes and improve on subsequent assignments in the assessment process.

At assessor discretion, the Self and Peer feedback session may take place in the field or back at the hut or camp. This may be decided by weather conditions, party condition, length of day, time of day or the need for more

Self and Peer Feedback Method

- As soon as possible after the assessment session the group gathers in a closed circle (no dark glasses and no lying in bunks);
- Discussion is confidential to the group;
- Only the topic being tested is for assessment;
- The Assessors facilitate the process.

Improvement round

- Candidate speaks first, saying what could have been done to improve the guide assignment;
- In turn, each of the participants' comments specifically on what would have improved the assignment for them. Use only 'I' statements and speak to the Candidate;
- Assessor records and has the final say.

Affirmative round

- Candidate first on what was good;
- Participants speak in a different order on what specifically was good;
- Assessor speaks, thanks the Candidate, and closes the discussion.

¹⁶ Developed by John Heron - a psychologist, in transpersonal psychology

Marking schedules

Assessors will carry the **NZMGA Technical Syllabus** on assessments as a reference for marking Candidates on the various topics as they are assessed on a daily basis. Each assessment course has its own Marking Schedule that identifies which of the 50 topics of the Technical Syllabus are to be assessed and a score for each topic that weights each topic according to the particular assessment. This will be used to record assessment of candidates on this course and is an effective tool of Candidate evaluation against an established standard. Level 2 courses are assessed using the same marking schedule as Level 1 courses but with a higher standard.

By the end of the course, the assessors must evaluate the overall performance of each participant under each topic heading and express their conclusion. Final marking is done jointly by the assessors who also draft an overall performance report for each participant. Weather or delays in the programme may alter the teaching/-assessment balance. Allowances will be made for improvement before the final marking and not all topics may be assessed.

The marking schedule incorporates two forms of summative feedback for each specific topic. The two forms of feedback are:

- A score (e.g., out of a possible 10 marks). Grading is based on the Candidate's knowledge, performance, skill, speed, technique and demonstration at the level they are being assessed.
- A written comment aiming to provide actual evidence of actions and behaviours with any specific feedback if any.

Score (out of 10)	Demonstration of Candidate's knowledge, understanding, performance, skill, speed or technique
10	Exemplary for all guides at that level
7-9	Varying degrees of improvement on 6 but combined does not achieve 10/10
6	Minimum that is acceptable when teaching the topic or with a client
5	Satisfactory, although it would be unacceptable when teaching the topic or with a client
2-4	Varying degrees of improvement on 1/10, but the combinations does not achieve 5/10
1	No demonstration

Marks are not presented to participants but are used as a tool for assessors and as a means for participants to gauge the weight of marking given to each topic. Participants receive only an indication of standard on each topic, each section, and a similar indication as to their final grade on course reports using the, --, -, + or ++ nomenclature.

Course failure for Level 1 Candidates will occur if there is;

- A total course mark of less than 65%, or;
- A failure of four topics or more, regardless of the cumulative total (less than 50% constitutes topic failure) or;
- A failure in either **Client Safety** or **Snow Safety** topics¹⁷.

Course failure for Level 2 Candidates will occur if:

- A total course mark of less than 75%, or;
- A failure of any individual topic.

If it is not possible to assess every topic on an assessment course, it will be noted in the individual course report.

All Candidate results involving changes of NZMGA qualification status are subject to ratification by the Technical Subcommittee.

It is not possible to be assessed on parts of an assessment course.

Moderation

The marking schedule is a key tool for moderation for the diverse conditions encountered on an assessment course.

The team of Assessors will collaboratively contribute to the evaluation of any Candidate referring to evidence provided by observations of actions, their effect and the feedback provided by the self and peer feedback process. Through rotation of the assessor teams, Assessors will get opportunities to work with different Assessors and share and educate the pool on assessing to the standard.

The annual Assessor Training Day is also a moderation tool. The agenda varies according to the needs expressed by the Assessor pool. A report is compiled from recommendations from the Assessor Training Day and distributed to all members of the Assessor pool for reference. Examples of topics addressed:

- Updates to the certification scheme;
- Updates to budgets, transcripts and feedback;
- Teaching and feedback method updates;
- Discussion around venues and assignments for various courses and course locations;
- Discussion around standards and techniques used in guiding.

¹⁷ Responsibility for safety during the Course resides ultimately with the Assessors, but initially is the responsibility of the Candidates. If the Assessors have to step in and halt a task for safety reasons, then the Candidate in control of the session has failed outright. Exceptions may be made in the case of a training exercise involving a Level 1 candidate who is still being taught guiding techniques.

Appendix 1 - Training and Assessment Days

	Ski	Climb	IFMGA
Entry Courses			
Pre-Hospital Emergency Care	5	5	5
Avalanche Risk Management Level 5	7	7	7
Snow and Ice Guides Training	7	7	7
Technical Ski Exam	1		1
Rock Exam		1	1
Ski Guide Training	4		4
Rock Guide Training		4	4
Total Entry	24	24	29
Formation			
Ski Guide Assessment Level 1	14		14
Climb Guide Assessment Level 1		14	14
Avalanche Risk Management Level 6	14	14	14
Work Experience			
Supervised work experience	14	14	28
Assessment			
Ski Guide Assessment Level 2	14		14
Climb Guide Assessment Level 2		14	14
Total Assessment Days	56	56	84

Appendix 2 - IFMGA Common Platform¹⁸

Description	Disciplines	No days	Notes
Practical training			
General mixed	Snow/ice/rock	25	
Supervised practical learning	Snow/ice/rock	7	Should be delivered by 2 different IFMGA trainer teachers (mentor / supervisor).
Ski/winter	Ski mountaineering, off piste, freeride, mechanised skiing, ski touring	25	
Supervised practical learning	Ski mountaineering, off piste, freeride, mechanised skiing, ski touring	7	Should be delivered by 2 different IFMGA trainer teachers (mentor / supervisor).
Rock	Alpinism, Rescue, technical climbing	20	
Total Practical training		84	A minimum of 60 days of the 84 should take place in appropriate classic mixed terrain
Theoretical	All related subjects	7-10	
Country specific requirements	disciplines associated with unique terrain environment requirements	3	
All Training Total		94	
Group training content			# of days
Snow and avalanche			6
Theoretical basics			3
Trekking and expeditions (high altitude medicine, group guiding, remote areas)			3
Self-rescue and organised mountain rescue			4
First Aid			2
Practical winter training in skiing, ski mountaineering and mechanized skiing			16
Practical summer training in high mountain regions in rock, ice, mixed and on glaciers			16
Climbing in alpine rock terrain, sport climbing, indoor climbing and guiding on via ferrata			7
Assessment of practical and theoretical skills and knowledge during Aspirant Guide Course / first training period in rock, ice, ski and mixed terrain			6
Training days at the Member Associations' discretion			3
Total number of training			66

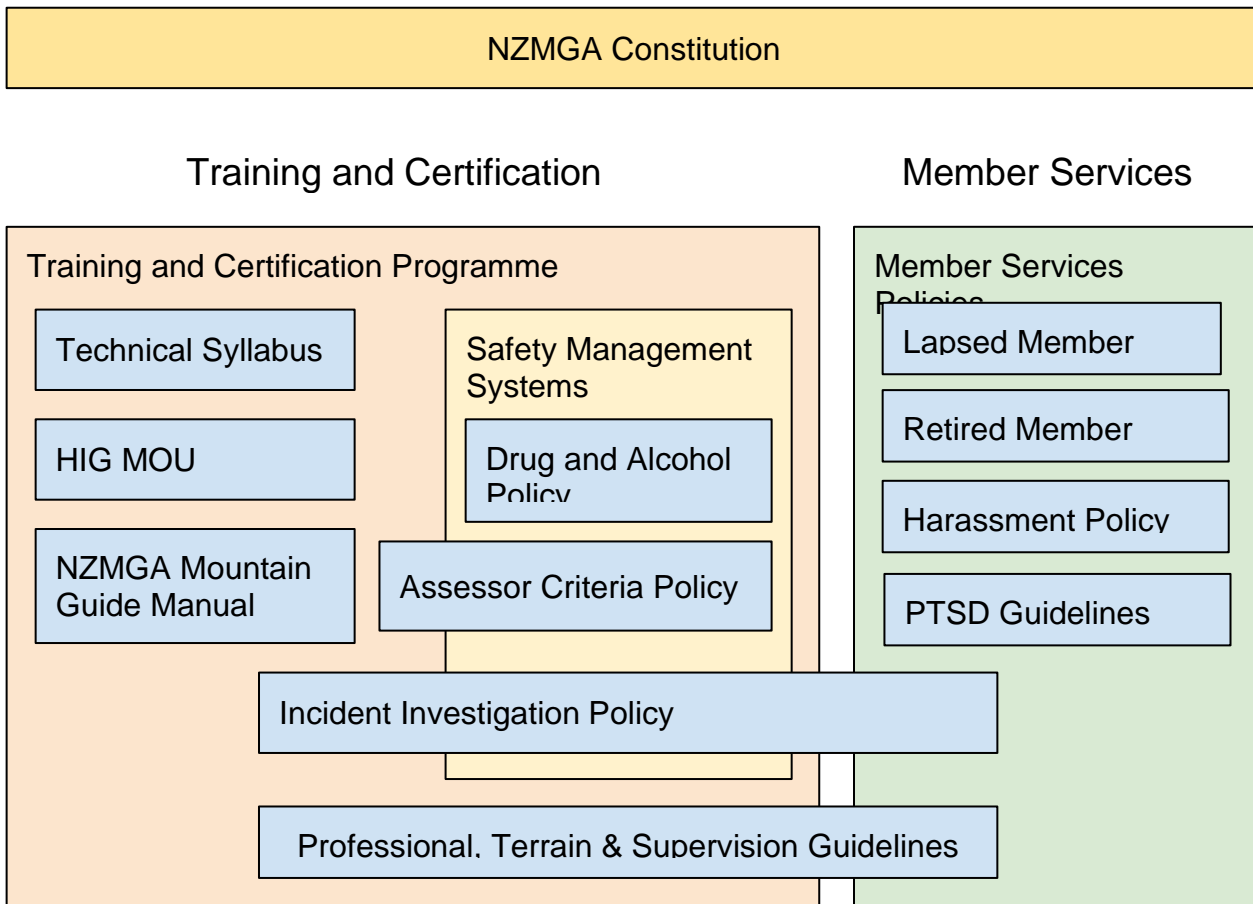
¹⁸ <https://ifmga.info/%3Cnolink%3E/training-and-assessment>

Appendix 3 - Marking Schedules for Assessment Courses

Assessment Course					
Topic	HIG	ATG	CGA	SGA	
	Client Care (Subtotal)	120	150	160	150
1	Trip preparation and planning		10	10	10
2	Communication with client	10	10	10	10
3	Route selection	20	20	20	20
4	Terrain analysis	20	20	20	20
5	Pace setting	10	10	10	10
6	Cooking and camp management		10	10	10
7	Shelters and bivouacs		10	10	10
8	Application of guiding technique	10	10	20	10
9	Group management	10	10	10	10
10	Client control	20	20	20	20
11	Client safety	20	20	20	20
Topic	HIG	ATG	CGA	SGA	
	Personal skills and knowledge (Subtotal)	140		180	130
12	General mountain movement	10	10	10	10
13	Fitness and stamina	10	10	10	10
14	Professionalism and personal appearance	10	10	10	10
15	Personal equipment	10	10	5	5
16	Reaction under stress	10	10	10	10
17	Leadership and decision making	10	10	10	10
18	Rope handling	10	10	10	10
19	Rock climbing (ATG rock scrambling)		10	20	
20	Belays on rock		10	10	
21	Snow and ice climbing	10	10	20	10
22	Step cutting	20	20	5	5
23	Belays on snow and ice	10	10	10	10
24	Navigation		10	10	10
25	Snow safety skills		20	20	20
26	Mountain weather	10	10	10	10
27	Nature and environment	20	20	10	10

	Topic	HIG	ATG	CGA	SGA
	Instruction (Subtotal)	50	50	50	50
28	Speech and contact with students	10	10	10	10
29	Structure of the lesson	10	10	10	10
30	Site selection	10	10	10	10
31	Support material and demonstration	10	10	10	10
32	Ability to motivate	10	10	10	10
	Search and Rescue (Subtotal)	30	50	40	30
33	Improvised cliff rescue	10	10	10	
34	Crevasse extraction	10	20	10	10
35	Stretchers	10	10	10	10
36	Avalanche rescue and transceivers			10	10
	Skiing (Subtotal)				50
37	Heli-ski guiding				10
38	Snowboard and splitboard guiding				10
39	Downhill skiing				20
40	Laying a skin track				20
	Non-assessed Topics				
41	Field communications				
42	Aircraft safety				
43	River crossing				
44	NZMGA Harassment Policy				
45	NZMGA PTSD Guidelines				
46	NZMGA Incident Investigation Policy				
47	NZMGA Professional, Terrain and Supervision Guidelines				
48	Adventure Activities Regulations				
		HIG	ATG	CGA	SGA
	Totals	340	430	430	410

References



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Gary Dickson for his work on the Training & Certification Programme during his tenure as President.

Anna Keeling for her work on the assessment methodology.

Sam Bossard for his work on the Rock Guide training.

Glossary

Administrative Officer (AO)

The appointed officer of the NZMGA whose responsibility is the day to day running of the association. All initial enquiries and monies paid are done through the Administrative Officer.

Applicant

A person that has applied to the NZMGA for admission into a training pathway.

Committee

The executive committee of the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association.

Guiding

For the purpose of this document 'guiding' is defined as work with clients on a professional basis in the pursuit of either mountaineering, backcountry skiing and snow boarding, rock climbing, ice climbing, glacier walking and mountain trekking.

IFMGA

International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations. Also known as UIAGM (Union Internationale des Associations des Guides de Montagne). NZMGA is a member and sets its training and certification standards at the level of this international body.

NZMGA

New Zealand Mountain Guides Association.

NZSIA

New Zealand Ski Instructors Alliance.

Candidate

A person that has their application accepted for an NZMGA training pathway.

Technical Subcommittee

Those members of the NZMGA Executive Committee who are IFMGA Guides.

Technical syllabus

The instruction syllabus was determined by NZMGA.

Training Officer (TO)

The appointed officer of NZMGA whose responsibility is the administration of NZMGA courses.