



What is your assessor looking for?

We all know the best way to pass an assessment is to immerse yourself in the activity and gain as much experience and competence as possible before presenting for assessment. Here are ten handy hints from an assessor's perspective that may help towards a successful outcome.

1	Record your experience
2	Prepare, be slick and practiced.
3	Identify your weaknesses and develop them.
4	Pick a date plenty of time in advance and work to it.
5	Complete all pre-course paperwork (booking form, home paper) and read the award scope.
6	Turn up on time with the right kit and ready to go.
7	Check understanding; get clarification if you are unsure what you've been asked to do.
8	Keep it simple, don't try to over impress.
9	Make decisions based on your experience
10	Relax and enjoy it.

1. Log all of your experience. The DLOG is the best place for this as it is easy, and once you book an assessment, the course provider has access to it up until the assessment report is submitted. This enables them to get a good understanding of your previous experience and they may be able to give you some feedback before the assessment starts.

2. Get out and practice. Practice *all* the areas that are in the syllabus and not just your weak ones; it will enable you to be slick and look organised. The other great thing about preparing for walking, climbing or mountaineering assessments is that it will help to improve your fitness for the activity. You can then turn up for assessment knowing that your focus will always be on completing the task rather than getting pumped or puffing and panting your way up the hill trying to count your paces.

3. Have an action plan. Assess your weaknesses and work out roughly how long it will take to improve them. It doesn't matter who you are, we all have things that could be improved.

4. Book the assessment in plenty of time and work towards the date, ensuring you tick off the improvement goals you want to make en route. That way you set a target and focus on it, and should arrive at the assessment feeling ready and confident.

5. Get course booking forms in to the provider so they can confirm your place and check your experience. Remember without this they cannot hold a place on the course for you. Don't leave any home papers to the last minute, some will require some research and involve you learning something in advance. Also, read the syllabus and guidance notes in the candidate handbook so that you are completely clear about what will be expected of you. Not all aspects of the syllabus will be covered in detail on the training course so make sure you have filled in any gaps and built on what you have learned.



6. There are specific minimum hours for each award assessment that need to be covered. Any delay will put pressure on you, the assessor and everyone else so don't be late and try not to fuff.

7. When you are asked to complete a task, if you are not completely sure of what you've been asked to do, check. This will save time and embarrassment.

8. Do what is required, efficiently. If you over complicate things you generally get in a mess. Also, the assessor needs you to go from A to B, or lead a Severe graded climb etc. We don't need you to try and impress and do some overcomplicated navigation technique or end up placing two dodgy pieces of gear on a scrappy HVS because you're trying to show you can climb.



9. If you choose to do something in a particular way, it should be because you understand it, or it works for you based on your experience. With this in mind, don't rush into things; use your experience to help you complete the task efficiently. If you start trying to second guess your assessor, or reproduce something you've seen someone else do without understanding why, chances are it'll go wrong and you'll end up wishing you'd done what you normally do.

10. You should have turned up with the right knowledge, experience and attitude and the view that you are going to pass. (Why would you be here otherwise?) So relax, and do what you've been asked to demonstrate. You only have to show the assessor you *can* do it.

It's relatively straightforward to identify whether someone can set up a top rope, navigate or belay. It's not so easy to assess whether you're likely to make appropriate decisions based on sound judgement in the future. To help with this your assessor might set a home paper and will ask you lots of questions. This doesn't mean you've done something wrong, it's a way of exploring the depth of your knowledge and how you might apply it to various situations. An assessment should also be a learning experience and your assessor may demonstrate another way of doing something to build on your current skills. Don't let this put you off.

Whatever the result of your assessment, you should receive some feedback upon completion. Use this constructively for your future development.

You may have noticed that all these things are what you can do prior to assessment to prepare. Well that is "what your assessor is looking for". Prepared, experienced and organised candidates. Assessors are only human and aren't there to catch you out. They just need you to show them that you are safe and can meet the standard set out by Mountain Training. Good luck.



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