

BMG TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT SCHEME GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Thank you for your interest in becoming a British Mountain Guide. Please refer to a copy of the Syllabus and Guidance Notes for the BMG Training and Assessment Scheme. This is available for download on the BMG website (www.bmg.org.uk) or by requesting a copy from the BMG Office. This clearly shows the pre-requirements candidates must meet before applying, explains how the scheme operates and gives full details of what is involved at each stage of the syllabus. Please read it carefully before you submit an application.

The BMG is a professional body, representing the interests of its members who wish to make all or part of their living through guiding in the mountains. Since the acceptance of the BMG in the UIAGM (the International Union of Mountain Guide Associations) now the IFMGA (International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations) and our membership of the European Guides Commission, the standards governing entry into the BMG scheme have become necessarily broad based and high. In return, the BMG diploma is recognised abroad. In addition to demonstrating technical ability and teaching skills, candidates are expected to possess an attitude and commitment befitting the professional status of the International Mountain Guide. Candidates must be prepared to devote considerable time, energy and resources to their successful progress through the scheme.

How to Submit an Application

Your application must be sent to the BMG Office (address below) **no later than the annual deadline of 31st October, each year**. The Training Committee will consider applications and you will be advised shortly thereafter whether or not you have been accepted on the Entrance Exams process of the BMG scheme.

If you are accepted, you will become eligible to attend the Ski Entrance Exam which is planned for January in the Alps. This is followed by two further exams; the Scottish Winter Entrance Exam (March) and the Rock Entrance Exam (May) normally held in Wales. There will be a fee for these courses. **Please note that you are only accepted on the BMG Training Scheme when you have completed this entrance process.**

Your application must be accompanied by the registration fee of £75

Below are some notes on how to present your application. Please follow these guidelines as closely as possible – a consistent style of presentation greatly assists the Training Committee.

In the past, a great deal of correspondence has been generated by applicants failing to submit medical reports, first aid certificates and references. May I remind you that the onus is on you to produce these items and not on the BMG to request them.

Application Content

Documents needed to apply:

Please download from BMG website or request from the BMG Office the latest versions of:

The Application form (please use the latest version)

Guidance Notes for Applicants (this document)

Syllabus and Guidance Notes (The BMG Training Handbook)

Included below:

Notes to Applicants – How to present your Application

Medical Report Form (to be completed by your GP)

Reference and Mentor Requests (two references required)

Your Application should include:

- Your Application form sent by email or hard copy to the BMG Office.
- The medical form which has been completed by your GP.
- A photocopy or scanned copy of your valid mountain first aid certificate.
- Your registration fee of **£75** which should be paid by cheque made payable to “British Association of Mountain Guides” or BACS
- Four hard copy passport photographs or one electronic photo of yourself. Suitable for use on professional documents.
- Fill in your name on the reference requests and send these to your two referees. Their references need not accompany your application, **but must arrive before application deadline (31st October)**. If you need help in obtaining a reference or Mentor from an IFMGA guide then please get in touch the BMG Technical Director.

The above can be submitted electronically by email (guiding@bmg.org.uk) or by sending hard copies to the BMG Office.

When sending any email attachments please suffix your name onto the attachment name, e.g. “BMGApplicationJohnSmith”

As Training Director, it is my job together with the Training Committee and your guide referee/mentor, to help you within the scheme with any queries they may have and to ensure that they understand how the scheme operates. If you are unsure about any aspect of your application, do please get in touch with me at technicaldirector@bmg.org.uk

Tim Blakemore

BMG Technical Director, March 2023

How to Present your Application

Please type your application where possible. Applicants are encouraged to submit electronic versions of their application. You are also required to send in **four** passport photographs of yourself (hard copy) or an electronic version.

Details of your personal and mountain experience should be submitted in sections under the following headings, each section starting on a separate sheet.

Please complete the application form thoroughly showing whether routes were led, seconded or instructed, and also the year and month in which they were undertaken and include the name of your partner. If you need more space to enter experience please copy and paste the table required

and append it in the correct section. Your application is reviewed in an holistic way although you should match up to experience requested.

N.B. Applicants must include the names of their climbing partners on all significant ascents. They must also submit ALL their relevant experience in ALL areas. Routes soloed can be documented but they will not count for the required quota.

Section 1 Personal Details

The first page of your application should contain the following information: name, address, telephone number, date of birth, age on application and the names and addresses of two referees; one referee should be a guide and your mentor. If you do not know a guide please get in touch so that we can find one for you.

Section 2 General Mountaineering History

A brief chronological summary of your experience. This should include when and where you started hillwalking, rock climbing, skiing etc, areas with which you are familiar, relevant posts which you have held, periods of employment instructing or guiding, courses attended and expeditions undertaken. Please lay this information out clearly and simply to give an overall picture of your background, without specifying details.

Section 3 Rock Climbing

List routes climbed at HVS or above and also enter the names of crags on which you have only climbed at lower grades. List separately any pure rock routes climbed outside Britain. Soloed routes do not count towards the quota but you should still include them. Please refer to the pre-requirements in the Prospectus and Syllabus.

Section 4 British Winter Climbing

List winter routes climbed, placing all Scottish winter routes before those climbed further south in the UK. If you have important non-Alpine winter experience outside the UK which is not represented by the route list, such as icefall climbing in Europe, note it separately in this section. Soloed routes do not count towards the quota but you should still include them. Please refer to the pre-requirements in the Prospectus and Syllabus.

Section 5 Alpine Mountaineering

List details of your Alpine Mountaineering experience over a minimum period of at least four years. This experience should show the following: knowledge of several Alpine climbing areas, at least three of which should be European regions; twenty ascents of major summits; a variety of experience including rock, snow/ice and mixed (mentioning any winter ascents).

As a guideline your experience in the European Alps should include a minimum of twenty big routes, at least ten of which should be Alpine Très Difficile standard or above. Of these ten routes five should be at least 800 metres in length and be mixed routes of a serious and committing nature (i.e. classic North faces or similar). Again soloed routes do not count towards the quota but you should still include them.

Section 6 Skiing

Include any experience on skis in both Britain and abroad, with particular reference to off-piste skiing and ski mountaineering. You should include at least thirty listed days, of which at least fifteen must be linked days consisting of at least three consecutive nights in huts on recognised tours. Briefly describe your present standard.

Section 7 Leadership/Instructional Experience and Relevant Qualifications

The BMG is interested not only in a record of your technical ability, but also in confirming the breadth of your experience and your commitment to professional work in the mountains.

Section 8 References

Two references are required, at least one of which should be a Mountain Guide. References will be accepted separately. If you need help in finding a Mountain Guide to act as a referee please get in touch with the Training Director so that we can assist you in finding a guide referee. However it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the two references by the application deadline (**31st October**).

Section 9 Application Fee

This must be paid by cheque or BACS for £75 made payable to "British Mountain Guides Association" and sent to the BMG Office.

Section 10 First Aid

Please provide a photocopy of an appropriate mountaineering First Aid qualification.

Section 11 Medical Report Form

Visit your GP to have the medical form (below) completed.

Section 12 Additional Information

If you have additional information, which you feel is relevant to your application, please include it in this section. However **do not** submit diaries, brochures, photographs or logbooks with your application.

Further Advice

It is also recommended that the candidate obtain as much experience and observation of instructing as possible prior to entering the scheme. Candidates should note that the pre-requirements are high to help ensure that those who embark on the scheme have the commitment, experience and technical ability required to complete the scheme successfully.

Dear Sir/Madam

Medical Report

Your patient has applied to join the scheme of training and assessment to obtain the British Mountain Guides Carnet. This carnet will qualify him/her to practise as a professional Guide, taking paying clients climbing, mountaineering and skiing in the mountains worldwide.

I would be much obliged if you would complete the form below, derived from your personal knowledge and/or the candidate's medical records. Any fee you may wish to claim for this report is the responsibility of the patient.

Yours faithfully

Tim Blakemore

BMG Technical Director March 2023

MEDICAL REPORT

For the British Association of Mountain Guides

Report on (Name): _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

1. Are you his/her usual medical advisor? YES / NO
2. If YES:
 - a. How long have you acted in this capacity?
 - b. Over what period do your records extend?
3. Would you please comment on his/her general fitness and freedom from active disease.
4. For what serious illnesses or injury has he/she received attention? Please state dates, duration and particulars.
5. Has he/she undergone any special investigations or hospital treatment with particular reference to epilepsy, fainting attacks or blackouts, vertigo, Ménière's disease, diabetes, psychiatric treatment, excessive addiction to alcohol, drugs, tobacco?
6. Kindly add any additional information that may be of relevance to the work of a professional mountaineer. If none, please state none.

Signed _____ Date _____

Doctors Name:

Surgery Address:

Tel Number:

Request for a Reference to apply for the BMG Training Scheme

To whom it may concern.

The above named person has applied to train as a guide with the British Association of Mountain Guides and has given your name as referee. I would be grateful if you could give me some information in writing as to this person's suitability to the profession of Mountain Guide.

The BMG regards a Guide as a person capable of safely conducting hill walking parties in the mountains at all times of the year. A Guide should also be able to lead very safely rock climbs of E1 5b standard and have a very sound knowledge of mountain rescue techniques and practices. A Guide must also be able to lead safely on Grade IV/V snow and ice routes and be familiar with winter rescue and survival techniques. A Guide's alpine and ski mountaineering experience should demonstrate the ability to move quickly, smoothly and efficiently over difficult glacial terrain and mixed ground, and these skills are of greater importance than the number of hard routes ascended.

A Guide must also be an honest person of good character whom one can recommend to the general public as reliable and one who will honour professional commitments.

Please indicate whether you can confirm the authenticity of the contents of this application and that the experience of the applicant meets the pre-requirements of the British Association of Mountain Guides. The training committee values the role of 'mentor', which a referee can play in advising, supporting and liaising, on behalf of the applicant, at all stages of the scheme. If you are a BMG Guide please indicate whether or not you are willing to act as a mentor for this applicant. This is a longterm and committing undertaking on your part, which should continue to the time that the applicant has successfully become a guide and beyond, please see the Mentor notes below.

You may not feel able to provide information on all of the above areas, but any comments you can make are most welcome. Please ensure that your reference reaches the BMG office, either in the candidate's application or sent directly to **BMG Office, Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ES**, or by email to **guiding@bmg.org.uk** no later than **31st October**.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Tim Blakemore

BMG Technical Director

March 2023

Request for a Mentor and Referee to support an application for the BMG training scheme.

To whom it may concern.

The above named person has applied to train as a guide with the British Association of Mountain Guides and has given your name to be their mentor and referee. I would be grateful if you could give me some information in writing as to this person's suitability to the profession of Mountain Guide.

For advice on how to submit a reference please refer to the "Request for a Reference to apply for the BMG Training Scheme". Please also write that you are willing to become their mentor on your reference.

The role of a mentor is an important one which demands long term commitment. It should also be a very rewarding position in which you can support a future guide through their training. Even after the completion of the guide training the mentor is still a valuable support to the mentee in terms of their on-going professional development and with any professional standards issues that might arise during their guiding career.

It is important that the mentee has a friendly face to help guide and support the mentee through the scheme. The mentor-mentee relationship should be free from any formal structure related to the training scheme. An open and honest relationship should be developed where the mentee is allowed to explore areas of guiding techniques without the fear that they will jeopardise their position on the scheme.

The role of a mentor is not to be judgemental as this is done on the BMG assessment courses. However constructive feedback is an important aid to the future guides' development.

Any issues the mentee has to do with guide training that cannot be fully addressed by the mentor should be discussed with the training officer so that a suitable solution can be found.

The training scheme has limited resources so does rely on self-development and outside stimulus to supplement the BMG training courses. As mentor you are expected to engage in this process.

It is beneficial that there is contact after every training and assessment course so that they feel supported and comfortable with their progress through the scheme. It is understood that this will not always be practical, but regular communication is encouraged.

The mentor should also make themselves available to help with any specific training that the mentee is requested by the training committee, although this work should be paid by the mentee if deemed appropriate.

To become a mentor it is recommended that you are an active Mountain Guide with more than three years' guiding experience.

If any clarification to the role of the mentor is needed you should contact the training officer.

I would like to thank you for considering becoming a mentor to someone on the BMG training scheme and am sure that you will find it a rewarding and stimulating role.

Yours faithfully

Tim Blakemore

BMG Technical Director

March 2023