



Union of International Mountain Leader Associations
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UIMLA Standard

**STANDARD FOR ACCESS TO AND PRACTISE OF THE PROFESSION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 FOREWORD

This Standard for the profession of the Union of International Mountain Leader Associations **International Mountain Leader** represents over 30 years of development of a common platform for the profession of mountain leaders since the first version was ratified in 1992. At this time, the founding member countries already had a rich national heritage in outdoor and mountain activities.

This Standard now has global reach and represents the highest quality for the profession of International Mountain Leaders across the member Associations of the Union of International Mountain Leader Associations (UIMLA). A UIMLA International Mountain Leader (IML) is a guarantee of a qualified, experienced, and resourceful leader with comparable and internationally accepted education and skills.

The purpose of this Standard is to ensure that a UIMLA IML develops the skills required to lead in a diverse range of mountain environments and countries other than their own.

UIMLA International Mountain Leaders are ambassadors for the world's greatest traditions in outdoor activities and mountain tourism.

This Standard replaces the 2013 edition.

1.2 THE INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER

The IML is a certified outdoor professional with thorough knowledge of the mountain environment and who has the pedagogical, technical, and physical capabilities to lead and educate people in the mountains throughout the world. Importantly, the IML also raises awareness and encourages sustainable practices in the fragile environments they lead in.

The primary goal of the IML is to assist people in the discovery and exploration of the natural and cultural environment of the outdoors, particularly in hill and mountain regions, including education of environmental knowledge and the teaching of technical skills, while maintaining the safety of their group within it. The IML has the diversity of skills and knowledge to operate at any time of the year, on snow-covered terrain, in remote locations, at altitude and in challenging weather conditions and mountain ranges across the world.

Under this Standard, the activity of the IML is walking (hiking and trekking).

Under this Standard, the activity of the IML does not include Alpinism, roped climbing or skiing.

The IML understands and respects variations in legislation for outdoor professionals between different countries.

1.3 ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The following abbreviations and definitions are for understanding of the Standard and are listed alphabetically.

CPD - Continuing Professional Development, ongoing education, and maintenance of skills for existing IMLs and a requirement to maintain the UIMLA authorisation or certification (National Association membership and carnet) as a UIMLA IML.

Consequential - referring to terrain. Terrain where an uncontrolled stumble or fall would result in serious injury. The terrain contains hazards, and the group would be given instructions and managed accordingly. The leader must exercise good judgement and make sound decisions regarding movement in this terrain and how to minimize hazards or avoid them where possible.

Consolidation - the process of becoming or being made stronger and more certain, the process of using skills and knowledge gained under formal training while gaining further personal experience before returning for assessment in the skills and knowledge expected.

Foot traction devices - The use of foot traction devices is now commonplace, and this is the common term for a variety of additional footwear devices to give added friction on slippery surfaces. Their design may include small chains, cleats and spikes. They are widely available to the public and are also often used in everyday situations to prevent slips and falls while walking.

Hard Snow - a snow condition regularly occurring in maritime climates where the snow is exposed to melt-freeze cycles. For the purpose of this definition, it also includes névé, firn, and wind-scoured snow surfaces and snow that lingers into the early summer such as in shaded gullies where it may block a footpath. In such conditions, the snow can be extremely hard.

IFMGA - The International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations, also known as UIAGM and IVBV.

IML - International Mountain Leader (in this Standard a UIMLA IML).

Inconsequential - referring to terrain. Terrain where there is typically a low likelihood of a stumble or fall causing serious injury. The terrain underfoot is typically of low or medium gradient and with few or no objective hazards. Where objective hazards are present, for example ice on a footpath, the leader can make sound decisions to ensure the safety of the group and/or equip the group with suitable safety equipment to reduce the risk of accident due to any hazards to a minimum. Inconsequential terrain can become consequential, for example in adverse weather conditions, if slippery, or if covered in hard snow or ice.

National Association - The local IML membership association and member of UIMLA.

Pedagogical - relating to the methods and theory of teaching.

Provider - The approved provider of the training and/or assessment to become a UIMLA IML. This may be the National Association, an approved training school or centre, or National Authority.

Snow-covered terrain - Referring typically to winter conditions when the night temperature is close to or below freezing and most of the journey is spent on snow. In spring, there is a period where there can be extensive snow cover in the mountains and the day and night temperatures are above freezing.

Summer - Referring to non-winter conditions when the day (and usually the night) temperature is above freezing and little or no snow is encountered. Often includes part of the spring and autumn seasons.

UIMLA - The Union of International Mountain Leader Associations.

1.4 GUIDANCE NOTES

Guidance notes are included in a smaller and grey, italicised font for clarification of the related text in this Standard. They are included to increase common understanding and interpretation while reading this Standard.

2. ACCESS TO AND PRACTISE OF THE PROFESSION OF INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER

2.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS

2.1.1 Rights and Prerogatives of the International Mountain Leader

Article 1

1. Access to the profession and practice of the IML under the auspice of UIMLA are subject to the conditions presented within this Standard.
2. The profession of the IML may be practised as a principal or secondary profession, as a full-time or part-time profession or as a seasonal profession.
3. The profession of the IML may be practised alongside other qualifications provided the IML respects the UIMLA Logo Policy and country-to-country variations in legislation for outdoor professionals. See also Article 4.

Article 2

1. The IML is qualified to lead, teach, support and train clients, paying or otherwise, in and to all mountain areas all over the world and at all times of year, including at altitude and on snow-covered terrain, where the activity is walking (hiking or trekking).
2. Under this common Standard and without additional and appropriate training and assessment, the UIMLA IML respects the following:

- a. In mountainous terrain, where the topography is rugged, steep, and/or consequential, progression of the IML and their clients is typically on footpaths or marked trails. On such footpaths, there may also be sections of fixed equipment or passages where the hands may be needed for balance. The IML can also negotiate sections of missing footpaths. The IML is also aware of the hazards present in this terrain in winter and under snow cover.

Sections of fixed equipment excludes via ferrata routes where specialist equipment is necessary to prevent falls.

- b. The IML possesses the skills to manage groups safely on all mountain topography where the terrain is of low to medium gradient. Movement is not limited to footpaths. The IML is aware of the hazards involved in movement over slippery ground, and on hard snow or ice.
- c. Glaciers may only be crossed where they form part of a nationally or internationally accepted and waymarked walking route and where the use of a harness and rope is not necessary to safeguard progression and thus the glacier terrain crossed is benign. The IML understands and respects national regulations regarding glacier travel.

Benign: can easily be walked across and thus is essentially flat; in the area of the crossing, the glacier is free from dangers such as plunge-holes or any hazard of hidden crevasses.

- d. The IML can evaluate physical hazards around themselves and their group in all terrain and manage their group accordingly. The IML can make sound decisions regarding safety in unforeseen circumstances in all terrain.

Physical hazards may include for example danger of loose rocks or rockfall, the consequences of heavy rain or abrupt changes in weather, and avalanche danger in the terrain the group is on or going to, and from above.

Making safe decisions can include choosing suitable alternative plans or cancelling a trip in the event of unfavourable weather, terrain, environmental conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances, or if the planned activity is too difficult for the client or group.

- e. The IML can issue and train clients in the use of safety equipment that is beneficial to progression in the activity of walking and to the overall wellbeing and safety of the group and that is in common use for the activity of mountain walking (hiking and trekking), including on snow-covered terrain. Under this common Standard, issuing equipment to clients must not encourage exposure to more technical or consequential terrain, or progression into terrain where the hazards are incompatible with the activity of walking (hiking and trekking).

Safety equipment would also include avalanche transceivers, probes and shovels which may be carried in relevant conditions for avalanche safety and companion rescue.

- f. The IML is skilled in the use of a rope to safeguard a client or clients on exposed footpaths, on sections of steep or exposed ground or where a path is protected with fixed equipment for the purpose of smoother and safer progression, or under difficult weather conditions. For this purpose, the IML may carry a rope and several slings and karabiners. In such circumstances, the use of the rope is not needed for progression of the IML themselves, or by the group under normal circumstances, but is used exceptionally for the safety of a client or clients.

The rope that an IML would deploy is typically a 20 to 30m length of approximately 8mm semi-static, 'trekking', 'walking' or 'confidence' rope. The rope is not used for climbing or to arrest a fall.

Examples of use of the rope by the IML may include:

- *joining a group together for security in a white-out or difficult weather conditions,*
- *to join emergency shelters together in heavy snowfall,*
- *to safeguard clients in river crossing,*
- *to safeguard a fatigued or nervous client along an exposed footpath, such as by placing a handline,*
- *to recover or secure a client who has slipped or fallen off the footpath in exposed terrain.*

- g. Issuing or using other equipment for safety or progression is subject to further appropriate training and assessment beyond the scope of this common minimum Standard and will be limited by national legislation in some countries (see Appendix 4C).

Article 3

1. The qualified IML must practice based on the legislative, regulatory, or administrative arrangements in the country where they are resident and/or countries where they are operating.
2. The Aspirant IML as defined by this Standard is a person who meets the entry criteria for the training and has registered with the Provider and is progressing through the training and assessment process but who has not yet qualified.

In some countries, the Aspirant as defined in this Standard, may be called a 'trainee' during the period of training and an 'aspirant' when they have completed training and are ready for assessment.

3. The Aspirant IML must practice based on legislative, regulatory, or administrative arrangements in the country where they are resident and/or countries where they are training.
4. The Aspirant IML must only practice under the supervision of a qualified IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide who has thorough knowledge of this Standard.

2.1.2 The UIMLA Authorisation

Article 4

1. The use of the title "International Mountain Leader" and the wearing of the UIMLA badge is subject to authorisation; this authorisation is issued by the National Association, subject to the approval of UIMLA, and where required, the appropriate national government authority.
2. The wearing of the UIMLA badge or logo is permitted when the IML is leading activities beyond the scope of (outside of) this minimum Standard provided the IML respects local regulations and other nationally

regulated professions, and the IML is suitably qualified according to national or international qualification standards and is insured to do so. In such circumstances, the IML must be able to testify to their competencies upon enquiry. The IML must also adhere to the UIMLA Logo Policy.

3. The yearly UIMLA authorisation or certification as administered by the National Association attests to the technical and professional ability of the IML and to the currency of their CPD, first aid and professional liability insurance.

Article 5

1. The technical and professional ability is attested by the following: entry requirements, training, consolidation, and assessment corresponding to this common Standard.
2. To maintain the UIMLA authorisation or certification, the IML must undertake a programme of CPD as defined by their National Association or local legal authority and approved by UIMLA. The minimum requirement is detailed in the UIMLA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy.
3. The aptitude and competency requirements are attested according to the means defined by UIMLA and the National Association and/or Provider.

Article 6

1. The authorisation or certification referred to in Article 4 is provided in the form of an annually validated carnet showing:
 - the name of the IML,
 - the date of birth of the IML,
 - a passport style portrait photograph of the IML,
 - the name and website URL of the National Association,
 - the individual membership number of the IML issued by the National Association or UIMLA,
 - the current UIMLA annual sticker or digital equivalent,
 - a reverse side including the UIMLA logo and UIMLA website URL.
2. The carnet may be issued as a physical card or digital *eCarnet*. The design of both must be approved by UIMLA.
3. The carnet is awarded with respect to the regulations defined in Article 5.
4. The use of the carnet and UIMLA badge, can be withdrawn, temporarily or permanently, under conditions defined by UIMLA, and implemented by the National Association, subject to the appropriate local legal regime.

2.1.3 Miscellaneous Conditions

Article 7

The practice of the activities listed in Article 2 requires of the UIMLA IML the obligation to subscribe to a public liability insurance covering the professional practice in all forms and on conditions defined by the National Association. This also includes insurance cover for additional skills and equipment as defined by the National Association. When an aspirant is practicing with clients for professional experience, such as under the guidance of a UIMLA IML, they should also be covered by suitable public liability insurance.

Article 8

UIMLA recognises the principle of free movement of the profession and the mutual recognition of the UIMLA IML qualification between National Associations. The authorisation to operate within member countries is, however, subject to local laws and is granted by the competent authorities.

2.2 CONDITIONS RELATING TO THE STANDARD FOR TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

2.2.1 General

Article 9

1. The training must be appropriate to the aptitude, ability, and competence one would expect from one such professional in technical and teaching areas as well as safety in the mountains.
2. The minimum level of the professional training is defined by this Standard as set out in Section 3 entitled "Competencies of the International Mountain Leader".

2.2.2 Entry Requirements to the Training to International Mountain Leader

Article 10

1. Access to begin training requires the following:
 - a. Minimum age of entry to training as defined by the National Association and subject to national law. Aspirants must be at least 18 years of age when attending the final assessment to qualify as an IML.
 - b. The National Association may request that applicants produce a reference from a UIMLA IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide that supports their application and suitability as a UIMLA IML.
 - c. Physical fitness to practice the profession, as defined by the National Association or the local legal authority, which may include a medical certificate and/or a fitness test during entrance to training.
 - d. Requirements of existing qualification and/or technical ability may be defined by the National Association, or local legal authority. These additional requirements may not be exclusive to human diversity or gender.
 - e. Prior to beginning training, the applicant must have minimum of 12 months of mountain walking experience including a minimum of 20 different mountain walking days each of minimum 6 hours duration under summer conditions in a variety of mountain terrain, and weather conditions. Prior to beginning training on snow-covered terrain, the aspirant must have a further minimum 10 winter mountain walking days on snow-covered terrain each of minimum 6 hours duration in a variety of mountain terrain and weather conditions. Further minimum experience criteria may be defined by the National Association, or local legal authority.

The 20 days of summer mountain walking experience must be gained prior to entry to training. The 10 days of winter experience must be gained prior to beginning training on snow-covered or winter terrain. The National Association may decide however, that all 30 days must be gained prior to entry to training. This requirement is MINIMUM experience, and the National Association may require aspirants that demonstrate limited experience to gain more experience than recommended in this Standard during consolidation. See Article 11.

For countries where national Mountain Leader qualifications exist and where these national qualifications are used as entry-modules to further training to become an IML (and are thus counted to the tally of training and assessment duration of the IML), then the above entry requirement is to be interpreted as being at entry to the national Mountain Leader qualification (with summer experience prior to a summer qualification and winter experience prior to a winter qualification).

It is also recommended that applicants have experience of overnight stays in the mountains, for example in tents or huts.

It is recommended that at least half of the minimum experience on snow-covered terrain is on snowshoes.

The requirement for personal experience is to ensure that all aspirants who enter the training have a minimum level of understanding of the activities involved and thus will have greater benefit from the specialised training. It is also to ensure that a large proportion of aspirants who gain entry to the training will have the motivation and prerequisites to succeed in the training.

It is recommended that the National Association adopts a definition of a 'Quality Mountain Day' (QMD) for summer and snow-covered or winter conditions to guide applicants and aspirants when they are gaining experience and recording this in their logbooks. Beyond being minimum 6 hours in duration and including a variety of mountain terrain and weather conditions, a QMD would include journey planning, ascent and descent of typically more than 600m, use of navigation skills, decision-making and judgement regarding route choice and terrain, and making progress or adjusting plans in poor or worsening conditions.

- f. The applicant has a genuine interest in hill and mountain walking/hiking and a strong desire to lead and train people in this terrain and environment.

2.2.3 Specification of the Training and Assessment of the International Mountain Leader

Article 11

1. The title "International Mountain Leader" indicates the completion of a programme of structured professional training, consolidation, and assessment.
2. The training will allow the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities as described in Section 3.
3. Consolidation is completed during the training period and prior to assessment or final exam but must be independent of the training. The period of consolidation allows aspirants to become stronger in the skills and knowledge expected within the scope of the IML and according to this Standard. Consolidation experience in summer (non-winter) conditions must be completed before the final summer assessment. All consolidation experience on snow-covered (winter) terrain must be completed before the final winter assessment.
4. The minimum consolidation experience to be gained in summer and on snow-covered (winter) terrain must be defined by the National Association.

It is recommended that the consolidation experience in summer conditions is minimum 30 days. Prior to the final assessment in summer conditions, the aspirant must therefore have a minimum of 50 days experience in summer conditions. It is recommended that the consolidation experience in snow-covered (winter) conditions is minimum 15 days. Prior to final assessment on snow-covered (winter) terrain the aspirant must have a minimum of 25 days experience on snow-covered (winter) terrain, of which it is recommended that half should be on snowshoes. The total recommended minimum experience of an aspirant at the final assessment to UIMLA IML is therefore 75 days, excluding the duration of training and assessments. It is also expected prior to assessment, that aspirants have experience of a wide range of overnight stays in mountain terrain in a range of building and shelter types and under a range of conditions. The aspirant should be comfortable with and accustomed to staying outdoors. It is expected that capable aspirants will have more experience than the minimum requirement.

5. Consolidation may be personal experience, assisting a qualified IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide, or professional leading experience as defined by the National Association and within local legal regulations.
6. Consolidation must include a minimum of 10 days of professional leadership experience. The experience can be gained by leading groups while holding a national Mountain Leader qualification and working within local legal regulations, or by gaining professional experience with groups by assisting, or being under the supervision of, a qualified IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide.

Professional leadership experience can be gained in both summer and snow-covered (winter) conditions and be included in, or additional to, the minimum consolidation experience as recommended above.

7. Consolidation experience as described above must only include activities that are within the scope of the training as defined by this Standard.
8. The National Association must define a minimum consolidation period between training and assessment under summer conditions.

It is recommended that the minimum consolidation period between training and assessment under summer (non-winter) conditions is 3 months.

9. The National Association must define a minimum consolidation period between training and assessment for snow-covered (winter) terrain.

It is recommended that the minimum consolidation period between training and assessment for snow-covered conditions is 6 months. Furthermore, it is recommended that aspirants experience at least two winter seasons with snow-covered conditions during their training, consolidation, and assessment. If an aspirant has exceptional experience within the scope of this Standard and who significantly exceeds the required minimum experience in snow-covered terrain, then the National Association may reduce the required consolidation period between training and assessment for snow-covered conditions for that aspirant.

10. The training and assessments are controlled and measured by tests and exams. Assessments should include demonstrations and presentations by the individual aspirants for the group.
11. No one may complete the final assessment without having completed all the elements of training. Exceptions may be granted where an equivalent element of the training is accepted by the National Association and or local legal authority.
12. All aspirants must have experience from geographically diverse mountain regions. Additional requirements may be defined by the National Association, or local legal authority, including requirements for altitude appropriate to local terrain.

It is recommended that all aspirants gain experience at least two foreign/international mountain areas beyond their national ranges or country of training, particularly in Europe. It is accepted that this may be impractical for Himalayan countries or countries in the Americas with vast mountain ranges of their own. For countries where this may be impractical, the training and assessment must include aspects relating to foreign regions, such as language, mapping and planning tasks.

13. For National Associations where there is no mountainous terrain in their home country, minimum half of the training and minimum three-quarters of the practical assessments must be undertaken in other countries where there exists extended mountain terrain suitable for the training and assessment of the skills defined in this Standard.

Article 12

1. The training and assessment will consist of multiple practical courses.
2. The entry experience, training, consolidation, and assessment activities of candidates must be recorded in a suitable logbook. The logbook may be a digital log.
3. The National Association or national regulations will determine the frequency and length of the individual training and assessment courses such that they are consistent with this Standard. However, the duration of the assessment of practical skills in summer conditions must be minimum 5 days and the duration of the assessment of practical winter skills on snow-covered terrain must be minimum 5 days. The aspirant-to-assessor ratio for practical assessments must not exceed 6:1. Each aspirant must be assessed by minimum two assessors during each assessment to ensure a fair appraisal of the aspirant.

The assessment duration of minimum 5 days may be split over multiple shorter assessments.

For assessment of some practical activities or scenarios, each assessor is likely to have fewer than 6 aspirants for safety reasons and to allow them to make a suitable evaluation of each aspirant. It is recommended that the aspirant-to-assessor ratio in most cases does not exceed 4:1.

4. Trainers and assessors must be suitably qualified and experienced International Mountain Leaders or IFMGA Mountain Guides with thorough knowledge of UIMLA, the IML profession, and of this Standard. Specialist subject teachers, who are suitably qualified and experienced in their own field, do not need to be International Mountain Leaders or Mountain Guides, such as teachers of meteorology, physiology, sustainability or first aid, provided the training (and in some cases assessment) they deliver is approved by the National Association or Provider.
5. Practical training and assessment courses in mountain terrain must be directed by a lead-trainer or lead-assessor – a Course Director. The Course Director has the overall responsibility for the aspirants and the other staff. A Course Director should have significant professional experience as a UIMLA IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide and instructor. The Course Director must have thorough knowledge of UIMLA, of the IML profession, and of this Standard.

It is recommended that a Course Director has minimum 4 years of professional experience as a UIMLA IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide and have been an ordinary staff member on minimum 4 previous IML training or assessment courses.

While it is appreciated that it may be challenging for new countries who are aspiring to become full members of UIMLA to have in-country staffing expertise, this can be mitigated by using personnel from established UIMLA National Associations and Providers and via shadowing and exchange-programs between UIMLA members.

6. The Provider must ensure the quality of the training and assessment and the suitability of trainers, assessors, and specialist subject teachers.
7. A member appointed by the National Association or the UIMLA Technical Commission may be present during any of the training courses or assessments. The appointed observer should be impartial to the aspirants, course staff and/or training school.

Article 13

The training and assessment programme will consist of theory and practical work. In all cases priority will be given to practical work.

Article 14

Training must include the following topics:

- safety in mountainous terrain and river crossing,
- navigation and planning,
- first aid, medical assistance and rescue,
- group management, safeguarding and leadership,
- travel risk management, emergency planning and incident reporting
- teaching,
- the mountain environment and local culture,
- sustainability, environmental awareness and minimum impact,
- anatomy and physiology,
- mountain weather,
- mountain survival and shelters,
- physical ability and movement skills,
- legal and economic considerations,
- multi-day activities, treks and expeditions,
- movement and skills on snow-covered terrain; and
- movement and safety on icy terrain.

Article 15

1. Each topic listed in Article 14 shall be examined separately or as part of a continuous assessment.

2. It is essential that candidates pass assessment in the topics listed in Article 14. Failure of the assessment will eliminate candidates from qualifying as an IML. Failure at assessment requires reassessment. Options for, and conditions of, reassessment are defined by the National Association.

Article 16

1. All the training and assessment of an aspirant must take place within five years. In exceptional circumstances, such as illness, pregnancy, or maternity/paternity leave, or delay due to a pandemic, the National Association may allow a longer period.
2. The National Association has the duty to ensure that the Provider must arrange a frequency of training and assessment courses for aspirants to complete their training and assessments within the five-year period. Failure for the National Association to ensure this can lead to disciplinary action by UIMLA.
3. Failure of the National Association to ensure a regular frequency of training and assessment courses, and thus maintain a core of suitably experienced and qualified instructors and assessors, can lead to disciplinary action by UIMLA.

Article 17

The National Association and/or Provider must ensure that the organisation of the courses is correct regarding;

- location and terrain;
- duration;
- staffing, including appropriate behaviour and a safe learning environment;
- type of training and assessment;
- monitoring of training and assessment standards; and
- ongoing quality control and improvement through course feedback.

Article 18

1. The aspirant IML may attend part of their training and assessment in any country where the respective Provider training and assessment systems are compatible, and this is approved by the National Associations who are involved.

This requires that the training schemes of the two countries are suitably aligned, and that language proficiency enables this. It is also possible that more experienced National Associations or Providers with skilled staff offer courses for other National Associations.

2. The National Association or Provider should ensure that part of the training and/or assessment is held in another country to the home of the National Association. See also Article 11.

Article 19

1. Duration of Training and Assessment

The total number of days of training and assessment must be a minimum of 50 days. The duration of the assessment in summer (non-winter) conditions must be minimum 5 days. The duration of the assessment in snow-covered terrain (winter) conditions must be minimum 5 days. The assessment days do not need to be 5 days of continuous assessment but may be split over multiple shorter assessments. The minimum duration of 50 days excludes personal mountain walking (hiking and trekking) experience.

2. Definition of Training

- a. One day of training is minimum 6 hours learning time and for practical training in mountainous terrain, the total length of the training day is therefore likely to be 8 hours or more in duration.

Learning time reflects the actual teaching time and excludes breaks such as lunch etc.

- b. Training is in the presence of a suitably qualified instructor, specialist subject matter expert, experienced UIMLA IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide with thorough knowledge of this Standard.
- c. The duration of practical training in summer (non-winter) conditions must be minimum 10 days.
- d. The duration of practical training in snow-covered (winter) terrain must be minimum 10 days.
- e. As part of their training, aspirants may attend formal training via attendance on CPD workshops or modules suitable for qualified UIMLA International Mountain Leaders and specifically approved by the National Association and according to the UIMLA CPD Policy. A total of 6 days of approved CPD attendance that is recorded in the aspirant's logbook and where proof of attendance exists may be counted towards the number of training days.

This addition of attendance on CPD courses under the definition of training is to introduce aspirants to the concept of CPD and the networking it provides within the National Association. Furthermore, training in new topics in this Standard such as sustainability and travel risk management will need to be provided to existing UIMLA International Mountain Leaders and aspirants can also benefit from these modules.

- f. Aspirants may be issued with assignments that are completed as self-directed learning. The learning outcome must be assessed. A total of 7 self-directed learning days may be counted towards the number of training days.

Examples of assessed self-directed learning include written test papers, writing of fact files (for example, on environmental topics, flora or fauna, and travel guides) or preparation of presentations/talks on topics related to the profession of the IML for fellow aspirants and assessors.

- g. During consolidation, an aspirant will practice as an assistant under the leadership or supervision of a qualified IML or IFMGA Mountain Guide or gain professional experience while leading a group using a nationally recognised Mountain Leader qualification. A maximum of 3 days of assistant practice or leadership experience may be counted towards the number of training days. For each of these 3 days, the aspirant must write a self-reflection report which is assessed.
- h. A maximum of 4 days from first aid and medical courses may be counted towards the number of training days.

In some countries, it may be normal for aspirants to complete longer outdoor/wilderness first aid or remote medicine courses but only 4 days may be counted in the tally of minimum 50 training and assessment days. Where standardized first aid courses are included in the training and assessment of the IML, then an example could be that 2 days are counted from an external 2-day (often a 16-hour course) and 2 days may be credited for additional aspects of training required in Section 3.3.

2.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARD

Article 20

1. This document will come into effect on November 2nd, 2024.
2. Existing UIMLA IMLs must ensure their understanding of this Standard.
3. It is the responsibility of each National Association to inform their members of this Standard.
4. It is the responsibility of each National Association and Providers to ensure that this Standard is implemented into the training and assessments of all new aspirants who begin the training after the 1st of January 2026. Aspirants who have begun the training prior to this date and according to the previous Standard, must complete training and assessment according to the previous Standard latest January 1st, 2028.

3. COMPETENCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN LEADER

3.1. SAFETY IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN AND RIVER CROSSING

3.1.1 List of competencies

The IML must have the knowledge and techniques needed to safeguard clients and groups in mountainous terrain relating to objective dangers. The IML must be able to plan suitable activities and make sound decisions to manage risk. The IML must be able to use equipment, for example a rope, slings, and karabiners, as a means of providing additional security in relevant circumstances where their use will reduce risk in relation to mountain walking (hiking and trekking). The IML must understand group management under changing weather conditions. The IML must understand water safety, basic water rescue and be able to safeguard groups when crossing rivers using a variety of appropriate techniques, and equally evaluate when not to do so. The IML must be aware of the dangers that glaciers pose, the hazards present in their vicinity, and in post-glacial terrain. The IML must understand basic glacier dynamics and how even apparently stable, waymarked, and generally accepted glacier crossings can change and be unsafe. The IML must be able to assess the terrain and conditions and, if necessary, adjust or stop the activity when equipment and techniques needed are beyond their competences.

3.1.2 Method of training

The training will mostly be practical but may include theoretical elements.

3.1.3 Method of assessment

The assessment must comprise a practical demonstration of skills and knowledge in a variety of topography and situations.

3.2. NAVIGATION AND PLANNING

3.2.1 List of competencies

The IML must be experienced with the techniques and tools of mountain orientation, navigation and planning so that they can travel safely in all situations and conditions. The skills and knowledge must include:

- the use of topographic maps of various type and scale;
- the use of a compass including geographical declination;
- the use of a GPS and appropriate mapping and its reference system;
- the use of an altimeter;
- the use of digital mapping only, including its weaknesses;
- the use of digital mapping resources including resources from foreign countries;
- the use of digital mapping resources with slope angle and run-out shading for avalanche avoidance;
- the use of different navigation techniques and strategies, including avoiding obstacles;
- route preparation, planning and realisation, including a route card with timings and alternative escape routes; and
- determining distances to a target in the terrain and a route and timing to reach the object.

The IML should have a proficiency in navigation such that they can navigate using contour-only mapping and identify direction without mechanical aid under normal visibility. They should also be able to navigate off paths in conditions of very poor visibility, at night, and in difficult conditions such as wind or heavy precipitation (both in summer and winter), using a map, compass and altimeter only.

3.2.2 Method of training

The training must be both theoretical and practical.

3.2.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must comprise a practical demonstration of skills and knowledge in both summer and winter conditions. The assessment must include: (a) a test in the mountains in difficult conditions and/or

at night in a limited time; (b) a test in a limited time using fixed check points marked on a map; and (c) and route planning task including expected hazards. In each case, the map scales should be appropriate to what is locally available but should not be a purpose made orienteering map.

3.3. FIRST AID, MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND RESCUE

3.3.1 List of competencies

The IML must have sufficient competence with first aid, medical assistance and basic rescue methods such that they may operate unassisted in remote and isolated areas. The skills and knowledge must include:

- basic first aid including CPR, use of AEDs and accident management;
- inspection of an injured casualty;
- first aid for mountain environments and scenarios in both summer and winter conditions;
- be able to recommend the contents of an individual and group first aid kit;
- recognition, treatment and immediate actions for exhaustion, dehydration, hypothermia, cold injury, snow-blindness, and the effects of heat including sunburn;
- recognition and treatment of altitude sickness and immediate emergency procedures for acute mountain sickness (AMS);
- treatment of burns;
- management of cuts, animal bites and stings;
- preparation for and organisation of a rescue (both improvised and by official rescue services);
- the use of appropriate communication equipment, including mobile and satellite messaging and telephones, radios, and personal location beacons; and
- basic communication in a foreign language for rescue purposes.

3.3.2. Method of training

The training must be both theoretical and practical and include scenarios for the aspirants to solve. First aid, medical assistance and rescue training in total must comprise a minimum of 4 days training.

Basic first aid and medical training typically has a duration of 2 days or 16 hours and is the typical entry and minimum ongoing first aid requirement. It is recommended that the National Association follow national guidelines for renewal of basic first aid and CPR competences, such as every second or third year. This standardized first aid training can be supplemented with training in outdoor scenarios, remote location first aid, hypothermia and/or altitude specific training modules.

3.3.3. Method of assessment

The method of assessment must comprise a practical demonstration of skills and knowledge. For first aid skills and knowledge, this may be demonstrated by a current first aid certificate, from an independent or external approved provider.

In countries where national standardized first aid courses exist; the National Association may decide that aspirants may complete such training and assessment externally to the IML training and assessment. In such a case, the National Association would specify the course required and would require that the aspirant present their first aid certification prior to being issued with their UIMLA license following successful completion of their IML training and assessment. The National Association must ensure that the remaining subject matter in this section must be completed within the IML training and assessment scheme.

3.4. GROUP MANAGEMENT, SAFEGUARDING AND LEADERSHIP

3.4.1 List of competencies

The IML must be able to manage and enthuse a group in the mountain environment, whilst also considering the objective and subjective hazards that may be present. In particular, the ability to manage a group will include:

- preparation and presentation of activity itineraries, and alignment of expectations;
- advising on suitable clothing, footwear and equipment for the conditions and trip;
- understanding of group psychology and managing disagreements in a group;

- organisation and control of the group, and group psychology;
- safeguarding and avoidance of inappropriate situations, particularly in foreign and unfamiliar social environments and particularly with minors and vulnerable adults;
- adaptation of the programme to suit different abilities and conditions;
- making and communicating decisions for the wellbeing of the group;
- managing a group in the case of an accident;
- basic communication in a foreign language, such as managing hut bookings and transport; and
- professional conduct and appearance, and positive, stimulating and effective leadership.

3.4.2 Method of training

The training may be theoretical and practical.

3.4.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical and through continuous assessment.

3.5. TRAVEL RISK MANAGEMENT, EMERGENCY PLANING AND INCIDENT REPORTING

3.5.1 List of Competences

The IML must understand the concept of hazards and risk, and decision-making processes to reduce exposure to and severity of risks to themselves and their group. The IML understands travel risk management and can identify threats to their logistics, to themselves, and to their group both in the planning phase and while travelling. The IML can create a travel risk management plan and understands that threats do not only come from the mountain environment. The IML also understands aspects of human factors in decision making. The IML can make dynamic risk assessments and act accordingly for the safety of themselves and their group. The IML understands hazards caused by climate change, glacier recession and extreme weather patterns. The IML can make emergency (contingency) plans. The IML understands the concept of 'near-misses' and how and where to record incidents, for example, via their National Association.

3.5.2 Method of training

The training may be theoretical and practical. It is recommended that aspirants create a travel risk management plan for a given trip and foreign location.

3.5.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment may be theoretical and practical.

3.6. TEACHING

3.6.1 List of competencies

The IML also has the role of an educator, hence the IML must understand the teaching/coaching methods of conveyance which will enable the passing on of skills and knowledge (both technical and environmental) to others, both in relation to the activities undertaken and to the mountain environment, sustainability and environmental impact as described in Sections 3.7 and 3.8.

In general, the role of the IML is as a facilitator and teacher and thus the majority of the time spent working with groups as an IML is delivering 'soft-skills' while also being able to teach a wide variety of practical skills for both summer and winter mountain walking (hiking and trekking). In many situations, the IML is also a storyteller, for example in conveying information about local culture, history, legends and folklore.

3.6.2 Method of training

The training must be both theoretical and practical.

3.6.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical and through continuous assessment.

3.7. THE MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL CULTURE

3.7.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a working knowledge of:

- the natural mountain environment, including flora, fauna, ecology, geology and geography;
- mountain cultures, local history and plant and animal adaptations in the mountains;
- access to the mountains and their conservation and protection; and
- local hut networks and access to these.

3.7.2 Method of training

The training must comprise both theoretical and practical elements.

3.7.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include both theoretical and practical elements and through continuous assessment. It is recommended that aspirants give talks on related topics to their peers during training and assessment.

3.8. SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND MINIMUM IMPACT

3.8.1 List of competencies

The IML recognizes the importance of preserving the natural environment and supporting sustainable practises in mountain regions and in mountain tourism. The IML is an advocate of the UIMLA Sustainability and Environmental policy. The IML considers the environmental impact of the travel they and their clients undertake, the accommodation and equipment they use and the food they consume with their groups. The IML can educate clients and groups about the fragility of mountain ecosystems and the importance of minimizing impact during guided activities, including the leave-no-trace ethos. The IML expresses respect for local cultures and the local people they meet.

The IML should be able to educate clients in ethics, for example asking permission before taking photographs of local people and appropriate use of local resources.

3.8.2 Method of training

The training may comprise both theoretical and practical elements and include carbon impact calculations for typical IML activities and treks.

3.8.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment may include both theoretical and practical elements.

3.9. ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

3.9.1 List of competencies

The IML must understand anatomy and physiology relating to physical activities in the outdoors and mountains, including:

- physical preparation for hiking and advising clients (including children) on preparation;
- diet, nutrition and hydration;
- characteristics of mountain exercise;
- preventing injuries;
- tiredness and recuperation;
- the effects of altitude, its treatment, and the process of acclimatisation; and
- the effects of cold and heat.

3.9.2 Method of training

The training will be predominantly theoretical.

3.9.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment may include oral and written tests and practical exercises.

3.10. MOUNTAIN WEATHER

3.10.1 List of competencies

The IML must understand weather systems and be capable of interpreting weather forecasts, weather maps including synoptic charts and using basic weather instruments, digital weather mapping and natural signs to aid in practical forecasting. The IML must also be aware of the specific aspects of mountain weather and of interpreting weather forecasts in the mountains. The IML must understand the influence of weather on a group traveling in the mountains and can manage situations such as strong winds and electrical storms.

3.10.2 Method of training

The training must comprise both theoretical and practical elements.

3.10.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include either a written or oral test of knowledge and practical use of weather forecasts.

3.11. MOUNTAIN SURVIVAL AND SHELTERS

3.11.1 List of competencies

The IML must be able to organise and assure the wellbeing and safety of the group without external support in unexpected circumstances such as fatigue, injury, benightment or adverse weather. This must include:

- the ability to construct or erect an improvised shelter efficiently, in both summer and snow-covered (winter) conditions;
- an understanding of different shelter types and their suitability and efficiency in different ground conditions, including group shelters (also known as bothy bags and storm shelters);
- the use of naturally occurring resources, for example shelter under fir trees;
- the ability to look after the group and themselves in difficult weather conditions; and
- the ability to make sound decisions regarding survival including the need for immediate shelter, warming, food/beverage consumption and/or evacuation.

3.11.2. Method of training

The training must be predominantly practical and include the construction of various types of shelter in both summer and snow-covered conditions.

3.11.3. Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical, and aspirants must demonstrate the ability to construct suitable improvised shelters in both summer and snow-covered (winter) conditions, without external support. On assessment in snow-covered conditions, aspirants should be able to demonstrate that they can construct a shelter largely using snow.

For purposes of training and assessment, local regulations must be respected, and suitable scenarios and locations should be chosen to respect these. Any shelters constructed should be removed after the activity and open holes dug below surface level should be filled in to prevent injury to others (such as skiers). It is not expected that damage is caused to naturally occurring flora or the local environment, unless these exercises are performed on private land with the acceptance of the landowner, and they are performed in a sustainable way.

3.12. PHYSICAL ABILITY AND MOVEMENT SKILLS

3.12.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a high level of physical fitness and be able to sustain a high level of physical effort over a prolonged period while leading a group. The IML must be comfortable moving over rough or difficult terrain and instructing clients how to move safely.

3.12.2 Method of training

The training must be practical to ensure that the IML meets the required standard of fitness, and they have appropriate movement skills on a variety of terrain.

3.12.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical and through ongoing assessment and include as a minimum an assessment of:

- the ability to walk a snow-free route for a period of 6 hours, including a distance of 10 km and an ascent of 1500 m, while carrying a rucksack with a minimum weight of 8 kg at any time; and
- an assessment of the ease and efficiency of movement, ability, and balance of the leader on varied terrain with the same weight of rucksack.

The speed of movement indicated for the six hours is equivalent to 10 m of ascent per minute and 4 km per hour with 10 minutes per hour for breaks. Should a continuous ascent of 1500m not be possible in the assessment location, then several shorter ascents linked together to achieve this altitude gain in total is acceptable.

3.13. LEGAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

3.13.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a level of legal and economic understanding appropriate to the environment in which they operate whether in an employed, self-employed, or voluntary capacity. Specifically, the IML must understand:

- the legal basis for the regulation of the profession;
- mobility of the IML between countries and understanding of regulation of the profession in certain countries;
- access and restrictions of access in mountain areas, national parks, nature reserves or protected areas etc.
- taxation and social security as it applies to the profession;
- public and criminal responsibilities;
- personal and liability insurance;
- the economic environment; and
- methods of marketing.

3.13.2 Method of training

The training must be theoretical.

3.13.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must comprise either a written or oral test of knowledge.

3.14. MULTI-DAY ACTIVITIES, TREKS AND EXPEDITIONS

3.14.1 List of competencies

The IML must be able to organise, manage the logistics of, and lead planned multi-day activities in the mountains in both summer and winter conditions, including campcraft, hygiene, and food and drink provisions,

as well as advise clients on suitable preparation and equipment for a given trip. The IML can look after themselves and their group including managing appropriate accommodation or shelter such as the use of staffed and unstaffed mountain huts, refuges, tea houses, and camping with tents or tarps or similar. The IML is aware of national or local regulations regarding wild camping and fires, particularly in National Parks or nature protection areas. In areas where wild camping is possible, the IML understands the ethos of making camp at dusk and breaking camp at dawn and 'leave-no-trace' in general.

3.14.2 Method of training

The training must comprise theoretical and practical elements including a minimum 3-day, 2-night journey in mountain terrain under both summer and winter conditions.

3.14.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include theoretical and practical elements including continuous assessment during a minimum 3-day, 2-night self-supported journey in mountain terrain during both summer and winter conditions. The National Association must define requirements for the type of accommodation suitable for the expedition depending on local traditions, weather conditions and safety. The National Association may define additional minimum overnight experience, to be gained prior to assessment, in both summer and winter conditions.

It is expected that aspirants have experience of a wide range of overnight stays in mountain terrain in a range of building and shelter types and under a range of conditions. The aspirant should be comfortable with and accustomed to staying outdoors.

3.15. MOVEMENT AND SKILLS ON SNOW-COVERED TERRAIN

3.15.1 List of competencies

The IML must have a working knowledge of movement in snow-covered terrain, the additional hazards present, and the techniques and equipment needed to travel safely. This may include travel on snowshoes and the use of avalanche safety equipment as appropriate to the terrain and conditions. The IML must understand snow and avalanche hazards, including avalanche forecasting, to be able to lead groups safely in the winter environment and choose appropriate terrain for the activity of walking (hiking and trekking). The IML must have the skills to be able to operate and lead groups safely in areas where there is no avalanche forecast available. The IML should understand the difference between continental, maritime and transitional snowpacks and limitations to safe movement in different terrain gradients with different skills and safety equipment according to the hardness of the snow surface.

The IML must have the ability to:

- obtain and interpret an avalanche forecast;
- plan an appropriate route for the group;
- assess snow conditions and avalanche hazard;
- make observations and adjust plans accordingly;
- lead a group in difficult conditions such as cold, high winds, white-out or darkness;
- select and use personal safety equipment, for both the leader and the group that is appropriate to the terrain and snow conditions;
- understand the benefits and limitations of different safety equipment on various hardnesses of snow and slope angle;
- demonstrate good technique and movement skills on snow and in appropriate snow-covered terrain with suitable safety equipment and be able to illustrate and teach these techniques to clients;
- demonstrate techniques to control, slow and stop a slide using body position only on appropriate terrain and snow conditions, and teach these techniques to clients;
- be able to cut a channel or steps to allow clients to safely cross a section of hard snow such as a snow-filled gully that may be blocking a footpath;
- be able to construct an anchor in snow in order to support a client with the rope or for the leader to descend, for example to negotiate a short steep section of snow;
- undertake a search efficiently using an avalanche transceiver and a probe;

- dig efficiently with an appropriate shovelling technique, and also coordinate a group to do so;
- understand the immediate first aid appropriate to an avalanche casualty; and
- teach and instruct clients in the use of avalanche safety equipment so that a group can effectively stage a companion rescue.

3.15.2 Method of training

The training must comprise both theoretical and practical elements.

3.15.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must include both theoretical and practical elements. The assessment must take place on snow-covered terrain. During the assessment each candidate must:

- demonstrate correct understanding of suitable snow-covered terrain for the IML and their group;
- demonstrate efficient and confident movement on snow and in appropriate snow-covered terrain with appropriate personal safety equipment and the ability to teach movement and appropriate techniques;
- demonstrate techniques to control, slow and stop a slide using body position only;
- demonstrate understanding and negotiation of water hazards;
- demonstrate the ability to create snow anchors and cut steps in snow,
- demonstrate understanding of avalanche awareness, observation and planning skills;
- demonstrate understanding of how transceivers work and the influence of interference;
- demonstrate the ability to teach the use of avalanche safety equipment for the purpose of companion rescue:
- demonstrate use of efficient excavation techniques, including group avalanche scenarios; and
- successfully complete a transceiver search with two buried transceivers.

The transceiver search shall comprise correctly identifying the location of 2 transceivers inside separate bags that are buried in snow at a depth of 0.6 to 1m in under 8 minutes. The buried transceivers shall be placed 5 to 20m apart and ideally in terrain that has a gradient of approximately 5 to 15 degrees. It is not necessary to dig out the transceivers, but the bags must be located positively with a probe. The candidate should start the search out of range of the buried transceivers. The search area should be free from outside interference. The bags that the transceivers are buried in should protect the transceivers from damage (such as with a resilient plastic layer) but be a walking rucksack or similar.

All aspirants must understand and be able to implement appropriate and efficient excavation (digging) techniques and lead a group in companion rescue. The aspirant must appreciate the time and effort required in excavation and how the process can be made as efficient as possible.

3.16. MOVEMENT AND SAFETY ON ICY TERRAIN

3.16.1 List of competencies

The IML must be able to manage a group safely over icy terrain such as surfaces with glaze ice (verglas) or frozen water for example car parks, roadside walkways, footpaths flooded with water and frozen waterways. For this purpose, the IML may issue and teach the use of appropriate safety equipment such as foot traction devices. Within the scope of this common standard, the angle of this terrain is always minimal, and clients can move otherwise unaided or with the support of walking poles. The terrain is never exposed or consequential.

3.16.2 Method of training

The training must comprise practical elements.

3.16.3 Method of assessment

The method of assessment must be practical.

It is expected that aspirants can demonstrate these skills on appropriate terrain and in relevant conditions. However, it may be the case during assessment that suitable icy conditions do not exist. In which case low-angle hard snow may be present and can be used, for example in early morning in shade.

4. APPENDIX

4.1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

1989 – With the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and establishment of the European Economic Community, and to anticipate future developments of free movement within the European Community, representatives from the national and professional mountain organisations of Austria, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Ireland, and Italy met with the common objective of harmonising the minimum standard of training for the profession of Mountain Leader. The *Commission Européenne des Accompagnateurs en Montagne* (CEAM) or *European Mountain Leader Commission*, as it was transposed, was formed.

1992 – Representatives from Belgium, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, and Spain met to ratify and sign the “Plate-forme communautaire des conditions d'accès et d'exercice pour la profession d'Accompagnateur en Moyenne Montagne”. In the English title of this document “Community platform for access to and practice of the profession of European Mountain Leader” the term “European” replaced the word “Middle”. In the remainder of the document, “Middle Mountain Leader” was transposed into “European Mountain Leader”. This platform was also known as the “Common Platform”. The first European Mountain Leaders were qualified according to this Common Platform.

In the following period, it became clear that the title of European Mountain Leader did not accurately reflect the increasingly international nature of the activities being undertaken. Nor did it consider mountain leaders living and working outside the European Union. However, the Common Platform did provide the basis for further countries to join CEAM namely Andorra, Poland and Switzerland.

2004 – Representatives from Andorra, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Switzerland met in North Wales, with the common objective of agreeing a constitution for a “Union of International Mountain Leader Associations” (UIMLA). UIMLA replaced the CEAM and it opened up membership to all nations with an interest in the profession of International Mountain Leader. The UIMLA Constitution was formally signed in Chambéry, France on November 27th.

2006 – UIMLA formed a working group charged with the review of the “Community standard for access to and practise of the profession of European Mountain Leader”. In 2009, an initial revision entitled “Worldwide standard for access to and practise of the profession of International Mountain Leader” was produced for consultation.

2010 – UIMLA instructed a working group to develop the document presented in 2009 based on the comments received from the Member Associations.

2012 – The revised UIMLA Standard, “Standard for access to and practise of the profession of the International Mountain Leader”, was accepted at the Annual General Assembly of UIMLA.

2021 – The UIMLA registered address is moved from France to Switzerland.

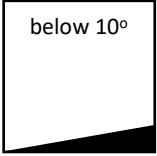
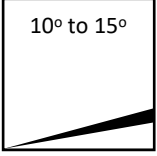
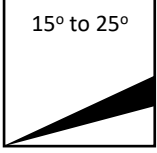
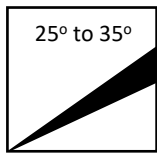
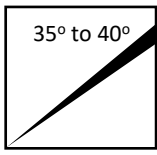
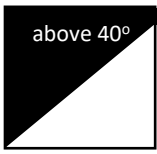
2022 – Over the preceding decade, the mountain tourism industry has grown tremendously. UIMLA has grown. Techniques and equipment have developed, and the world is also experiencing a change in climate that is impacting the mountain regions that the IML travels in. There is heightened focus on mobility, risk awareness and sustainability. UIMLA therefore establishes a working group to review and update the UIMLA Standard for completion in 2024.

2023 - UIMLA grows to 25 full member associations and 5 aspirant members. The total number of UIMLA International Mountain Leaders exceeds 3700. UIMLA accepted a common Sustainability and Environmental policy.

2024 – The 20-year anniversary of UIMLA and 35 years since CEAM was formed. The 2024 UIMLA Standard was released.

4.2. TERRAIN GUIDANCE FOR SNOW-COVERED TERRAIN

This section is to provide general terrain guidance for the activity of walking (hiking and trekking) under snow-covered or winter conditions. The leader must always exercise judgement as to when terrain is consequential and if any safety equipment or additional measures, including alternative plans, are required to safeguard their group. Hazards may be present in any of the terrain defined - either underfoot or from above. Awareness of the surroundings and assessment and mitigation of hazards is of paramount importance for safe travel. The slope angles stated are approximate.

| Terrain Gradient | Guidance |
|--|--|
| <p data-bbox="256 450 309 477">Low</p> <div data-bbox="204 490 360 645">  <p data-bbox="229 504 335 530">below 10°</p> </div> | <p data-bbox="426 450 1193 477"><i>Walking is generally easy for most people unless the surface is slippery.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 499 1329 526"><i>Some may find walking poles beneficial. On soft snow, snowshoes can be beneficial.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 548 1437 656"><i>On icy surfaces or on hard snow, where a slip is more likely, appropriate foot traction devices or snowshoes with a suitable underside are beneficial to safe travel and are recommended as a sensible precaution to protect the wellbeing of the group. For brief or unexpected sections of ice or hard snow, avoidance may offer more efficient and safer progress.</i></p> |
| <p data-bbox="236 687 331 714">Medium</p> <div data-bbox="204 728 360 882">  <p data-bbox="229 741 335 768">10° to 15°</p> </div> | <p data-bbox="426 687 1007 714"><i>Walking uphill will become more tiring for some clients.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 736 1437 790"><i>On soft snow that is bonded to the underlying surface, a slide is unlikely. Snowshoes are probably beneficial to progression.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 813 1437 889"><i>On hard snow, caution must be shown and appropriate foot traction devices or snowshoes with a suitable underside and walking poles are typically beneficial to and are recommended in most situations for safe and efficient travel.</i></p> |
| <p data-bbox="252 925 316 952">High</p> <div data-bbox="204 965 360 1117">  <p data-bbox="229 978 335 1005">15° to 25°</p> </div> | <p data-bbox="426 925 1437 978"><i>Walking uphill will be challenging for some clients. On slopes above approximately 20° and where there is no footpath, most people will naturally begin to zig-zag to lower the gradient.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 1001 1329 1028"><i>On soft snow, snowshoes and walking poles offer a significant benefit to progression.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 1050 1437 1238"><i>On hard snow, much greater caution must be shown, and often people will become uneasy as the gradient increases to 25°, particularly in descent. A stumble or a fall on hard snow on large or convex slopes and where there may be protruding obstacles will be consequential (an uncontrolled slide is likely to result in serious injury). Walking with snowshoes and walking poles on these slopes can give a false sense of security and may be inappropriate. For safe travel on hard snow of this gradient, appropriate safety equipment for the leader and the group, and specific training in its use for all involved, is necessary.</i></p> |
| <p data-bbox="245 1252 322 1279">Steep</p> <div data-bbox="204 1292 360 1444">  <p data-bbox="229 1305 335 1332">25° to 35°</p> </div> <p data-bbox="217 1480 347 1507">Very Steep</p> <div data-bbox="204 1520 360 1673">  <p data-bbox="229 1534 335 1561">35° to 40°</p> </div> | <p data-bbox="426 1252 1437 1337"><i>In avalanche forecasting, 'steep' typically refers to gradients of 30 to 35°, however the angles here are approximate and are for general guidance only for the activity of walking - in avalanche-prone conditions, the avalanche hazard increases dramatically as the angle approaches 30°.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 1359 1437 1498"><i>In snow-covered terrain of these gradients, the avalanche hazard, if present, will be highest. Therefore, it is often the case that snow-covered slopes of these gradients and their run-out zones under avalanche prone conditions, are incompatible with the safe activity of walking (hiking and trekking). In some countries, or local legal jurisdictions, the mountain leader may be prohibited from leading where there is a risk of avalanche, or the snow conditions are unsafe.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 1520 1437 1574"><i>However, where no avalanche hazard is present and on slopes of limited extent in safe and more gentle surroundings, descent in snowshoes on soft snow can be a fun activity.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 1597 1437 1650"><i>Hard snow on terrain of these gradients would present very significant challenges to most clients and would require specific training, mountaineering expertise and skill to negotiate.</i></p> <p data-bbox="426 1673 1437 1812"><i>Where a short section of steeper snow exists, such as a wind-scoop impeding the direction of travel, the leader may judge that negotiating the obstacle is the most appropriate action. In such a case, the progress of clients may be assisted by the leader cutting steps or supporting the clients with a rope. An obstacle may also be a gully filled with snow lying across the footpath - here the leader must ensure that there are no dangers incompatible with the activity of walking.</i></p> |
| <p data-bbox="185 1834 384 1861">Extremely Steep</p> <div data-bbox="204 1874 360 2027">  <p data-bbox="229 1888 335 1915">above 40°</p> </div> | <p data-bbox="426 1834 1437 1973"><i>Movement on snow-covered slopes of these gradients would generally not be compatible with the activity of walking (hiking and trekking) and progression in this terrain is likely to be on marked trails and footpaths where the gradient of the path itself is of a lower gradient and thus compatible with the activity of walking. A fall from a marked trail or footpath in this terrain would be consequential.</i></p> |

4.3. ADDITIONAL SKILLS OUTSIDE OF THE SCOPE OF THIS STANDARD

The common Standard, described in Sections 1, 2 and 3, sets out the minimum requirements of the UIMLA International Mountain Leader and all UIMLA International Mountain Leaders must meet this Standard. In some regions, there may be specific mountain topography, or traditions for other outdoor skills or activities with significant overlap to the competencies of the UIMLA International Mountain Leader. In such regions, the local IML may receive additional specific training in necessary additional skills that are outside of the scope of the above minimum Standard. In such cases, the National Association and the individual IML must understand and respect county-to-country variations in legislation for outdoor professionals and that additional skills or equipment may fall under the regulation of other professions in other countries. Furthermore, the National Association and/or the local legal authority, must have clearly identified the scope of the additional training and skills should they be delivered in conjunction with or as an extension to the training of the IML. The National Association must also ensure quality control, relevant CPD provision and ongoing revalidation of any additional skills or competencies. The additional skills must be compatible with local legal legislation where this exists, and other local regulated professions defined by law. The IML also understands and respects the requirements in the UIMLA Logo Policy.

Examples of related additional skills outside of the scope of the minimum Standard, but that may be adopted by a National Association and that are relevant in a number of regions could be (but not limited to);

- *working with pack-animals,*
- *appropriate techniques and safety regarding predators such as bears,*
- *specific skills for travel in arctic, tropical or desert regions,*
- *Nordic or free-heel skiing on easy rolling terrain,*
- *use of a harness with a dynamic cows-tail set along an extended section where the footpath has been protected by the local authorities with a handrail for use by the public (such as on footpaths to popular summits where there is often a large volume of traffic).*
- *...*