

# **TOP-ROPE SUPERVISOR SCHEME**

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## **PROSPECTUS**

**South African Mountaineering  
Development and Training Programme**

**Mountain Training Scheme**



Only trainers and assessors approved and accredited by the South African Mountaineering Development and Training Trust (MDT) may provide training and assessment that will lead to MDT accreditation.

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# Foreword

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The South African Mountaineering Development and Training Programme (MDT), was established to develop and maintain nationally recognised standards for the many clubs, organisations and individuals active in mountain related activities.

The programme, controlled by the South African Mountaineering Development and Training Trust, a legally constituted body registered with the master of the Supreme Court, co-ordinates and administers the functioning of the national Mountain Training Scheme (MTS).

Introduced in 1996, the MTS comprises of nine partially independent schemes, each integrating practical, theoretical and experiential components through a process of training and assessment. From the Basic Mountain Walking Leader Scheme to the Mountaineering Instructor Scheme, each is primarily concerned with good practice, leading to the safe enjoyment of the activity.

Training and assessment courses are run by individuals approved and accredited by the trust.

Since its introduction, the programme has gained the support of the many professional, semi-professional and voluntary guides, leaders and instructors active in South Africa's mountains.

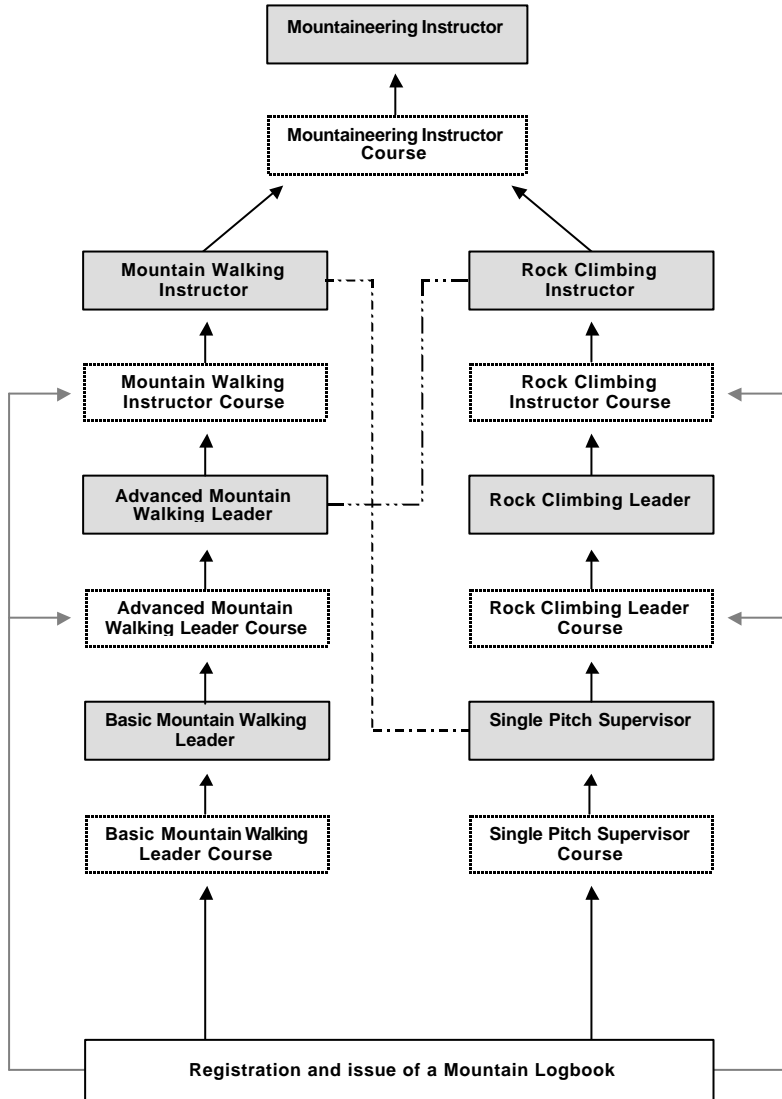
An overview of the Mountain Training Scheme and additional "stand-alone" schemes are provided on pages 5 and 7.

Information on the components of the MDT programme, how to register, or where to go for training and assessment courses can be obtained from:

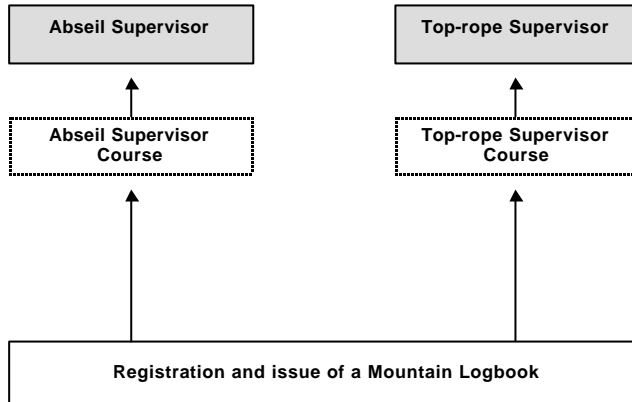
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# The Mountain Training Scheme



# Additional Schemes



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## Introduction

The Top-Rope Supervisor Scheme (TRS) provides training and assessment for those who supervise top-roped rock climbing on artificial walls, or accessible crags<sup>1</sup>. It is suitable for individuals working in a professional, semi-professional or voluntary capacity.

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## Scope

The scheme is primarily concerned with good practice leading to the safe enjoyment of the activity.

The scheme does not cover:

- the skills needed to approach and retreat from mountain crags;
- multi-pitch rock climbing and it's supervision;
- leading rock-climbs;
- access to any location where escape is not easily possible from the top and the bottom of a climb;
- the use of traditional anchors;
- the skills required to supervise a group abseiling.

Completion of a training course alone, without taking an assessment course, is not a qualification in itself, although it may be of considerable benefit to the trainee.

### Lead Climbing Endorsement

An endorsement to the TRS award may be gained in Lead Climbing. It must be stressed that the endorsement for Leading, does NOT endorse the candidate to supervise Lead Climbing.

**It only allows the Candidate to Lead easy sport routes for the purpose of setting up a top rope system.**

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## Stages

The scheme comprises of:

1. registration and the issue of a log book;
2. a two day training course;
3. further experience gained during a consolidation period;

4. a one day assessment course;
  5. continuing experience entered in a logbook.
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## Registration

The learner wishing to register must:

- be not less than eighteen years of age;
- have a genuine interest in rock-climbing and the supervision of groups;
- complete the registration form and enclose the appropriate fee.

Submission of the MDT registration will be handled by the provider<sup>2</sup>.

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## Training

Learners must attend a two-day training course run by an MDT approved training provider<sup>3</sup>.

The training course is for potential supervisors, it will emphasise those skills, which a learner might have difficulty in learning without expert guidance.

On completion of training, the training provider will endorse the appropriate page(s) in the logbook.

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## Logbook

Experience gained by the learner should be recorded in the MDT TRS Logbook. Entries should be concise and easily read, and should include all rock-climbing and other relevant experience.

The logbook is divided into five sections and includes:

- a record of experience gained prior to the training course;
- the particulars of the training course completed by the training provider;
- a record of experience gained during the period between the training and assessment courses;

- particulars of the assessment course completed by the assessment provider;
  - a record of experience gained after assessment.
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## Consolidation

During the period between training and assessment courses, the learner is expected to gain experience of top-roped-climbing at a wide range of venues and some practice in the supervision of groups. Ideally this should be under the direction of a suitably qualified person<sup>4</sup>.

The consolidation period will be a minimum of 3 months.

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## First Aid

At the beginning of the assessment course the learner must hold a currently valid and approved first aid certificate.

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## Assessment

Before attending an assessment course the learner must:

- have registered;
- have attended a training course with an MDT approved provider;
- have gained supervising experience of top-roped climbing;
- be familiar with all aspects of the syllabus;
- hold a valid approved first aid certificate.

During the assessment course, which lasts one day, the learner will be tested in accordance with the syllabus requirements.

The MDT assessment provider will endorse the logbook in one of three ways:

### Pass

Awarded where the learner has demonstrated proper knowledge and application of the course syllabus and has shown the necessary experience for the application of top-roped single-pitch rock-climbing supervision.

### Deferred

Awarded where the learner has generally performed at the required standard and shown the necessary experience and attributes, but where complete proficiency has not been attained. Written recommendations for further experience will be given, along with details of the proposed one-day reassessment.

### **Recommended reassessment**

Awarded where the learner's performance had been weak, or the necessary experience and attributes have not been shown.

## **Reassessment**

The learner will be required to attend the full one-day assessment course. This must follow a minimum period of three months. The learner may only take two reassessments before being required to take the entire course again. Since the reassessment will be based on information gained during the assessment all reassessments must be completed within a five-year period.

## **Exemption**

The learner who has substantial climbing and supervising experience on single pitch crags and climbing walls may apply for an exemption from stages two and three.

The learner, wishing to apply for exemption, must be able to demonstrate exceptional previous experience.

Applications for exemption must be made in writing to the MDT Administrator through an approved Assessment provider.

## **Top-Rope**

For the purpose of this scheme a top-roped climb is one which:

- employs the use of a top-rope, where the participant is belayed from either below (bottom roping) or above (top roping);
- allows the participant to be lowered to the ground at all times;

- in non-serious and has little objective danger;
- presents no difficulties of approach or retreat, such as route finding or scrambling.

## Top-Rope Supervisor Scheme

### Notes

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1. Ideally, this should be confined to a venue/ site which has standard operating procedures (SOPs), designed by experienced practitioner.
  2. On receiving the registration form and fee, the MDT administrator will issue a registration number and a letter as proof that registration has been successful. Should no such confirmation be forthcoming within a period of 30 days, the learner should contact the MDT administrator.
  3. A list of approved course providers is available from the MDT.
  4. Ideally, the learner should be under the direction of a Single Pitch Supervisor, or higher award holder.
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### Scope

It is the duty of the employer or organising authority to decide whether a supervisor possesses the personal attributes needed to take responsibility for the care of young people and beginners. It is the combination of technical skill, wide experience and personal qualities that form the basis for effective supervision. The scheme assesses the technical skills and experience; the employer or organising authority has to gauge the personal qualities.

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### Experience

Learners often experience some difficulty when compiling their logbooks, in trying to determine whether or not they meet the experience requirements of the Scheme.

The Director of Assessment and Assessment Panel are looking for both depth and breadth of experience since the learner who only has the minimum experience is unlikely to benefit from either training or assessment.

The Mountain Training Scheme is South Africa oriented; therefore the experience recorded should reflect this. Whilst experience gained abroad is undoubtedly valuable it is not necessarily the most appropriate.

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## Top-Rope Supervisor Scheme Acknowledgements

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1. **South African Mountaineering Development and Training Programme**  
Technical Committee.
2. **Mountain Club of South Africa. National Training Sub-committee (1994)**  
*Mountain Leadership Training Scheme. Proposed Policy and Guidelines a Consultative Document.*
3. **Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme**  
Working Group Training Standards  
*Model Training Standards for voluntary Leaders and Instructors.*
4. **Mountain Leader Training Board (UK)**  
*Single Pitch Supervisors Award Prospectus and Syllabus.*
5. **United Kingdom Mountain Training Board (1995)**  
*National Guidelines.*