

British Caving Association

How to book onto a course

Register with scheme

All candidates wishing to book onto a training or assessment course must be registered with the LCMLA & CIC award scheme through the Qualification Management System (QMS). Candidates need only register once, for which there is a one-off fee for both the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award and Cave Instructor Certificate schemes. To register;

- Click here: <https://britishcaving.justgo.com/> and sign up
- Click on "Membership" and purchase **LCMLA/ CIC Scheme Membership**
- BCA Membership is optional (annual fee)
- Videos supporting the use of the QMS are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/QMSSupport>

Register for a course

Courses are delivered by approved BCA Trainer/Assessors in line with the award-scheme syllabus. All courses must be registered on the QMS. Courses may be **open**, advertised publicly on the QMS with booking via the Events & Courses area, or **closed**, arranged privately with candidates registering directly with the Trainer/Assessor.

Candidates may only book if they meet the stated prerequisites.

Book onto an open course through the Qualification Management System

- Log onto the QMS: <https://britishcaving.justgo.com/>
- Find a course
 - Click on Events & Courses
 - Select course type then region
 - Find and select a course
 - Click "Add to cart" (note in most cases candidates are unable to book onto a course if they do not meet the pre-requisites)
 - **Follow the payment method, even though the payment will be zero, and complete the order**

Book onto a closed course direct with a Trainer/ Assessor

If booking directly with a Trainer/ Assessor, or for courses not advertised on the system, candidates will need to provide the following details (in the same format registered with the QMS) to the Trainer/ Assessor so that they can manually add candidates to the course:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Membership Number (note this starts with ME)
- Date of Birth

In both cases, once booked onto a course the Trainer/ Assessor will contact candidates with joining instructions, booking conditions and invoicing details.

Please be aware that Trainer/ Assessors may remove candidates from a course if the Trainer/ Assessors bookings terms and conditions are not met.

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Local Cave Leader Training

Aims of the LCMLA Scheme

The Local Cave and Mine Leader Award (LCMLA) is managed by the British Caving Association (BCA). The scheme provides an award recognising the competence of those taking responsibility for others underground, for the benefit of employers, providers and others in positions of responsibility. Through a nationally administered syllabus reflecting current good practice, supported by a robust training and assessment framework, the scheme promotes consistent standards of leadership, judgement and technical competence, while placing equal importance on participant safety and the conservation of fragile underground environments.

The **Local Cave Leader Training** course is aimed at cavers who aspire to be leaders in horizontal cave systems.

Pre-requisites

- Register with the scheme/ QMS
- A minimum of 12 caving trips, although at the discretion of the Trainer, a candidate can be accepted with less experience.

Course Overview

A two-day (minimum of 16 hours) training course with a ratio of 1 trainer with up to 6 candidates. At least 6 hours should be spent underground. The training course can be undertaken in any region.

The training course will have some elements of personal skill development, however, will primarily focus on leadership skills and techniques appropriate for leading groups within the remit of this award. It assumes candidates will have the basic level of competence in caving.

The training course will cover the key areas of the assessment syllabus listed below, with a tailored focus on areas candidates typically have difficulty with or identify with the Trainer/ Assessor as requiring further input. QMC have prepared some resources that may support a candidate, [these are available on the BCA website](#).

Trainer/ Assessors may offer resources and guidance for a candidate to help further their knowledge however candidates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the syllabus prior to attending a training course so they can identify areas they are unfamiliar with and address these with their trainer.

Resource Links

- [LCMLA Flowchart](#)
- [Cave & Mine Leader: Ropework](#)
- [Weather and its Effects on Caves](#)
- [Cave & Mine Leader: Water Safety](#)
- [Cave Emergency Card](#)
- [Radon Underground Document](#)
- [Radon Underground Training Module](#)
- [Long Churn Flash Flood Presentation](#)
- [Hydrology of Goydon Pot and Manchester Hole](#)

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- [Caving Belts](#)

Syllabus

The assessment criteria for the Core Skills and Group Day are available below, the training course should cover the key areas of the assessment criteria although candidates will be required to further their understanding prior to assessment.

Exemption From Attendance on a Training Course

Experienced cavers who already have substantial experience of personal caving and leading and supervising groups on caving trips may seek exemption from attendance on a training course. Exemption requests should be made via the QMCs Training Administrator via the QMS "Enquires".

There is no exemption for the assessment modules.

Your Next Step

Once a candidate has satisfied themselves that they are ready to be assessed, they will need to identify the caves they plan to lead groups in, and ensure they are thoroughly familiar with those venues in a range of weather conditions.

Candidates will also need to have logged the minimum pre-requisite personal exploration experience outlined below. Note this pre-requisite experience can include trips prior to the candidates training course.

As a guide, the minimum experience expected is:

- At least one-year's caving with at least 30 trips in at least 10 different systems across at least 2 different regions, **including 5 quality trips**.
- A proportion of these should be as a leader under supervision.
- Some trips may be above and beyond the remit of the award

A **quality trip** should satisfy at least 4 of the following criteria

- Exploration of a new route or cave (new to the candidate that is),
- Incorporates at least 4 to 5 hours of underground exploration.
- An experience that develops an individual's caving knowledge, skills and awareness.
- Incorporates cave exploration skills above the level of the remit of the award.
- Of the candidates own making i.e. the candidate is to lead the trip, or it is one done with peers and not led by an external source.
- Involves the application of vertical skills, digging or exploration.
- Exploration of a cave system with a streamway that responds to rainfall.

Candidates are to nominate 5 logged trips as quality days and justify this selection to the Trainer/ Assessor using the above criteria.

The assessment process is split into two stages:

- **Core Skills Assessment;** which can be taken in any region however cannot be assessed by the Trainer/ Assessor who delivered the candidates training followed by a
- **Group Day Assessment;** which cannot be delivered by the Trainer/ Assessor who assessed the Core Skills Assessment and must be taken in one of the regions the candidate intends to lead groups in and must take place within 12 months of the Core Skills Assessment.

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Candidates should approach a Trainer/Assessor independently to book an assessment. A list of Trainer/Assessors and their contact details can be [found by clicking here](#).

First Aid Requirements

In order for an award to be considered valid, candidates must hold a current and appropriate First Aid qualification.

To meet the required standard, a First Aid course should:

- Have a **minimum duration of two days (typically 16 hours)** instruction
- **Include a formal assessment** component
- Be **relevant to working in outdoor and adventurous** environments

While the BCA/QMC does not endorse specific First Aid courses or providers, candidates are encouraged to consult the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) website for guidance in selecting a course that meets the necessary standards and is appropriate for outdoor and adventurous settings.

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Local Cave Leader Core Skills Assessment Assessor Checklist



Pre-trip checks	
Weather forecast & source	
Water levels and fluctuations - effects of recent rainfall/ types of catchment areas (all regions)	
Effects of bad weather - surface	
Effects of bad weather - underground	
Access procedures	
Destination notes and call out procedure/ information	
Guidebook/ survey /online information sources	
Suitability of personal equipment - helmet/ belt / footwear	
Suitability of personal clothing for proposed trip	
Suitability of personal lighting	
Suitable technical equipment – e.g. rope/ krabs/ cowstalls and pre-use checks	

Underground emergency gear	
Spare lighting - suitability/ duration	
First aid kit, medication and storage	
Warmth - shelter/ spare clothing	
Emergency food	
Knife	
Writing material	

Conservation	
Due diligence to cave and surface conservation throughout the day	

Underground hazards	
Pollution	
Weil's disease/ potential infections	
Radon (see Radon training module)	
Poor/ bad air	
Slippery/ loose/ fragile rocks	
Boulder chokes	
Falls from heights/ potholes/ edges	
Deep/ fast moving water	
Awareness of cave flooding - speed/ likely effects	
Evidence of cave's reaction to rising water levels/ flooding	

Cave environment	
Basic surface geology/ topography/ karst features	
Cave development/ bedding & joints/ passage shapes	
Cave deposits/ sediments	
Temperatures/ draughts	
Cave life	
Fossils	
Formations (speleothems)	

Technical skills	
Underground movement skills – over a variety of passage types	
Underground navigation/ survey interpretation	
Anchor selection - natural and artificial, including pre use inspection	
Knots - alpine butterfly, bowline, figure of 8, Italian hitch	
Lifeline with Italian hitch - rigging, client management, leader position, technique and limitations	
Assisted handline - rigging, client management, leader position, technique and limitations	
Traverse - rigging, client management, leader position, technique and limitations	
Spotting of short climbs - client management, leader position, technique and limitations	
Use of fixed aids (e.g. ladders, chains, ropes) - pre use inspection, limitations	
Communications/ group management	
Leadership/ judgement	

Accident & emergency procedures	
Incident management/plan of action	
First aid treatment/ options	
Understanding of difficulty in rescue/ common rescue incidents	
How to call out cave rescue	
Hypothermia - awareness/ treatment/ actions	
Light failure	

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Local Cave Leader Group Day Assessment Assessor Checklist

Pre-trip planning and organisation	
Suitable risk assessments and local knowledge provided for each cave of the candidate's proposed list	
Pre trip administration - insurance/ risk assessments/ medical details/ consent/ AALS requirements	
Trip plan/ destination, call out information and procedure	
Weather conditions/ water levels/ flood awareness	
Compliance with access procedures	
Appropriate trip planned for the Group (min 5), tailored to the groups needs and aims	
Suitability of clothing & personal caving equipment	
Suitability of group clothing and caving equipment	
Suitability of group safety equipment/ emergency kit	
Duty of care/ legal obligations/ responsibility to group and others	

Conservation	
Due diligence to cave and surface conservation throughout the day	

Trip delivery and group management	
Appropriate leadership style sensitive to the group	
Care of group on route to the cave	
Effective group management/ control & safety underground	
Use of assistant leader(s) if appropriate	
Suitability of group briefings	
Basic surface geology/ topography	
Input on cave morphology	
Input on cave life	
Due consideration to others using the venue (if applicable)	
Appropriate pace	

Vertical aspects	
Appropriateness of technical equipment	
Protection of group on steep ground without a rope	
Protection of group on steep ground with a rope	
Self-protection/ own progression	