

# 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 Mine to Cave Leader Assessment

The **Mine to Cave Leader Assessment** is a one-day, practical evaluation of a candidate's local knowledge, personal skills, equipment, and competence in a horizontal cave system in which they wish to lead groups.

### Pre-requisites

- Hold a valid Mine Leader Award
- Candidates must have successfully completed either the
  - Cave Leader Training and Mine Leader Training, or
  - Combined Cave and Mine Leader Training, or
  - Mine to Cave Leader Training, or
  - Have been granted exemption from training via the QMCs Training Administrator.

Once a candidate feels ready to proceed with assessment, they must identify the caves in which they intend to lead groups and ensure they have developed a thorough understanding of those venues in a variety 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 cave exploration 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.

### Course Overview

- Assessment ratio: 1 Trainer/Assessor to 2 candidates (or 1:1 if required).
- The Trainer/Assessor delivering the assessment must not be the same person who delivered the training for this module.
- Assessments are typically conducted one of the regions the candidate wishes to lead groups in and involve at least 4 hours underground.

The assessment is split into two parts:

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## Part 1: Theoretical Assessment

- Typically completed as a written response to a question paper, undertaken in the candidate's own time and unsupervised.
- The paper usually includes a summary of points of interest, hazards, and how the candidate plans to manage a group **at each of the sites** on their proposed list.
- Candidates may opt to complete this component orally, although this will increase the overall assessment duration.

## Part 2: Practical Assessment

- Conducted underground at a suitable location selected by the Trainer/ Assessor.
- Candidates must be appropriately equipped for the venue; equipment suitability is part of the assessment.
- Practical assessments will cover the relevant syllabus areas.
- Scenario-based questioning may be used, particularly for emergency situations, but will not be the primary method for assessing leadership skills. Assessors must clearly communicate when scenario-based questioning is in use.

The Trainer/ Assessor has the right to terminate the assessment if the candidate is not up to the required standard in fundamental areas of the syllabus relating to safety or conservation.

## Assessment Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes:

- **Pass** - The candidate has demonstrated competence in all areas of the syllabus and will be awarded the credential.
- **Defer** - The candidate has not demonstrated full understanding in at least one area (typically theoretical) and must undergo a reassessment of that area. This may be completed with the same Trainer/Assessor or as a full reassessment with another.
- **Fail** - The candidate has not demonstrated competence in multiple areas or has not met the required standards for safety or conservation. A full reassessment will be required, either with the same or a different Trainer/Assessor.

## Post-Assessment Process

In the event of a deferral or fail, the Trainer/ Assessor will provide an action plan. This action plan will be uploaded to the candidate's profile on the QMS as a "Deferral" or "Fail" credential, visible only to the candidate (and the QMCs administrator).

Partial reassessments (i.e. in the event of a deferral) must take place within 12 months of the original assessment date.

The award remains valid for **five years**, provided the candidate remains active and holds a valid **First Aid Certificate**. To maintain the award beyond this period, candidates must complete one of the following before the award expires:

- Attend an **Update Workshop**
- Attend a **Vertical Leader training course**

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## Resource Links

- [LCMLA Flowchart](#)
- [Mine Terminology](#)
- [Cave & Mine Leader: Ropework](#)
- [Cave & Mine Leader: Water Safety](#)
- [Weather and its Effects on Caves](#)
- [Cave Emergency Card](#)
- [Radon Underground Document](#)
- [Radon Underground Training Module](#)
- [Caving Belts](#)

## Syllabus

The full checklist used by Trainer/ Assessors which forms the syllabus for this award is provided below. Candidates should ensure they are familiar with all aspects of the checklist prior to booking an assessment.

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 Mine to Cave Leader Assessment Assessor Checklist

**Candidates**

**Name:**

**Assessment**

**Date:**

**ME**

**Number:**

**Assessment**

**Venue:**

<b>Pre-trip checks</b>	
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	

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

<b>Conservation</b>	
Due diligence to cave and surface conservation throughout the day	

<b>Underground hazards</b>	
Pollution	
Weill's disease/ potential infections	
Radon (see <a href="#">Radon training module</a> )	
Poor/ bad air	
Slippery/ loose/ fragile rocks	

<b>Underground hazards (continued...)</b>	
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	

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

<b>Technical skills (*at least one of...)</b>	
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	
<i>*Lifeline with Italian hitch - rigging, client management, leader position, technique and limitations</i>	
<i>*Assisted handline - rigging, client management, leader position, technique and limitations</i>	
<i>*Traverse - rigging, client management, leader position, technique and limitations</i>	

