



Abseil Leader

Photo: John Entwisle

Scope and Syllabus

With the support of:



NZOIA™ Abseil Leader Scope

Abseil Leader Profile

The NZOIA Abseil Leader can:

- Plan and prepare introductory abseil experiences
- Instruct groups in the abseil skills required for a positive introductory experience
- Lead and manage groups for an introductory abseil session
- Demonstrate effective safety management
- Obtain weather forecasts and apply weather interpretation skills
- Provide interpretive information about natural and cultural history and about flora and fauna
- Role model and promote accepted environmental practices

The NZOIA Abseil Leader can work independently without direct supervision. Leaders are qualified to operate within an activity specific risk management plan. The qualification does not define the skill set required to write or approve such a plan.

This is a foundation qualification and provides a stepping stone towards NZOIA Rock and Sport Climbing qualifications. Refer to the Activity Safety Guidelines - Abseiling for operational good practice. www.supportadventure.co.nz

Scope

The holder of this qualification can set up abseils where:

- There is non technical access for the client to the abseil and the site allows for simple client management
- The setup is on fixed anchors (bolts, chains), bollards, trees or threads
- The Leader has visited the site previously and had their setup approved by an NZOIA Rock 1 or 2 holder
- Personal safety can be set up simply using fixed anchors, bollards, trees or threads
- The ground at the base of the abseil area is flat and hazard free

The following are examples of venues that could be within the scope of a Leader depending on the characteristics of the group, weather conditions and equipment:

Artificial structures (e.g. abseil towers, spans, buildings)

Mt Horrible – Timaru (if using trees or bolts only)

Karamatura (Huia)

Castle Hill

Albert Tce and Cattlestop – Port Hills

Windy Point (Boyle River)

Hospital Flat – Wanaka

Te Mata Peak

Spur Road – Timaru (if using trees only)

Castle Rock – Wharepapa South

Prerequisites

Be a current Full Member or working under an Affiliated Membership of NZOIA

Be 18 years old or over

Hold a current First Aid Certificate (minimum of 12 hours or 2 days including some direct contact with course tutors))

Have the following experience as evidence in a logbook:

Personal experience – at least 10 personal abseils at a variety of sites

Instructional experience – at least 5 days additional experience as a co-leader or assistant leader, providing assistance with the setup and management of group abseils at a crag and/or abseil structure

The prerequisite experience requirements are minimums, extra days are recommended.

Registration and Revalidation

Registration and revalidation with NZOIA provide proof of currency for NZOIA qualification holders.

Progressing to Rock 1 or Sport Climbing qualifications

As the NZOIA Abseil Leader gains more experience they may progress towards gaining the NZOIA Rock 1 or Sport Climbing qualifications. The steps they would follow include:

- Gaining the experience outlined in the NZOIA Rock 1 or Sport Climbing prerequisites
- Attending an NZOIA Rock 1 or Sport Climbing training course
- Working with a NZOIA Rock 1, Sport Climbing or Rock 2 holder

Syllabus

Assessment Notes

The syllabus outlines what the content of the assessment will include and gives an idea of what assessment tasks the candidate will be asked to complete. All judgements on how the candidate meets the syllabus must be based on current good practice and industry standards.

Assessors use three types of direct evidence to judge a candidate's competency:

- Written questions/assignment
- Questioning and discussion
- Observation of practical tasks

Anchor point selection is not required for this assessment – anchor points need to be selected and checked by the Assessor

Candidates are expected to know and follow a system – they are not expected to be flexible in their set up

Demonstration of knots and hitches is likely to be done during the abseil system set up but if not seen (e.g. clove hitch/prusik) will need to be demonstrated separately

There is a requirement for the candidate to demonstrate linking two and three anchors. (This could be demonstrated at ground level if the crag does not lend itself to doing this task at height)

Technical Competence

1. Demonstrate and/or describe the care and correct use of abseil equipment and clothing

The candidate will:

- 1.1** Use equipment that is in good condition and is well maintained
- 1.2** Complete a pre-activity check of equipment for damage
- 1.3** Use equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and current good practice
- 1.4** Correctly fit their harness and helmet
- 1.5** For any equipment used demonstrate and/or be able to describe; the properties, common use, advantages, limitations, minimisation of wear, damage checking and storage
- 1.6** Demonstrate uncoiling and coiling a rope
- 1.7** Demonstrate the fitting of an improvised chest harness and be able to describe the types of client that would need one
- 1.8** Carry and use the appropriate clothing for the environmental conditions

2. Construct a client abseil system

The candidate will construct at least two abseil systems using fixed anchors (bolts, chains, bollards), trees or threads which demonstrate:

- 2.1** Using secure anchors which; minimise potential shock loading, share the load equally, have minimal angles, allow ropes to run smoothly and minimise wear
- 2.2** The rope is positioned over the intended abseil route
- 2.3** The focal point is situated to provide an easy and safe attachment point and transition to abseil
- 2.4** Separate abseil and client safety lines which are releasable and comply with current good practice and industry standards

The candidate will demonstrate:

- 2.5** Linking two and three anchors together
- 2.6** Setting up and using personal safety at the top of an abseil when appropriate to do so

- 2.7 Correctly tying and using the following knots; clove hitch, Italian hitch, figure 8, prusik, tape knot, half hitch, overhand

3. Demonstrate safe and efficient abseil technique

The candidate will complete at least two abseils and demonstrate:

- 3.1 Attaching self and abseil device to abseil rope
- 3.2 Attaching and using a prusik for self-protection during the abseil
- 3.3 A systematic safety check before abseil
- 3.4 Safe, smooth and efficient abseil descent
- 3.5 Using two different friction devices e.g. figure 8, ATC, Reverso

4. Demonstrate abseil rescue skills

The candidate will demonstrate:

- 4.1 Tying off the safety rope and releasing the abseil rope to free a jammed abseil device
- 4.2 Releasing the abseil rope and lowering a client using the safety rope
- 4.3 Clear communication between the candidate and the client
- 4.4 An understanding of how to avoid and deal with other common problems e.g. client freezes, upside down client, foot entrapment

The Environment

5. Obtain a weather forecast and apply weather interpretation skills

The candidate will:

- 5.1 Obtain a relevant weather forecast for the planned abseil session and provide a verbal summary of the forecast
- 5.2 Describe the implications of the weather forecast for the planned abseil session and make decisions about the session based on the forecast
- 5.3 Observe any changes to the weather and modify the session if necessary

6. Demonstrate cultural and environmental knowledge and interpretation of areas visited

The candidate will provide interpretive information about:

- 6.1 The natural or cultural history of the area
- 6.2 Local flora and fauna

7. Role model and promote accepted environmental practices

The candidate will:

- 7.1** Demonstrate and/or describe the responsibilities to land owners and other users, including access protocols
- 7.2** Role model and promote the principles of Leave No Trace

Group Management and Leadership

8. Lead and manage a group for an introductory abseil session

The candidate will be responsible for a group for a minimum of one hour and will run at least four clients through an abseil.

- 8.1** Preparing and briefing the group including setting boundaries/safe areas and ground rules
- 8.2** Manage time appropriately in relation to the activity plan and conditions
- 8.3** Coaching, encouraging, motivating clients to ensure they are interested, engaged and have a fun and positive experience
- 8.4** Demonstrates a consistent repeatable system for attaching clients to the abseil and safety ropes
- 8.5** Demonstrate consistent management and control of the safety rope
- 8.6** Establishes rapport with clients and demonstrates an awareness of the emotional, cultural and other needs of the group
- 8.7** Demonstrate professionalism e.g. punctual, personal equipment correct and in good order, presentable, respect for others

9. Demonstrate effective safety management

The candidate will:

- 9.1** Demonstrate checking the abseil route for hazards e.g. loose rocks by abseiling self-protected
- 9.2** Have a first aid kit and be able to deal with first aid situations as required
- 9.3** Never compromise their personal safety or the safety of their clients
- 9.4** Demonstrate safe practices and good judgement and decision making within the scope of this qualification

Instruction

10. Plan and prepare an introductory abseil experience

From the operations safety management plan the candidate will prepare a written activity plan which will contain the following information:

- 10.1** A clearly defined purpose and session appropriate for the group
- 10.2** A logical sequence of progressions and activities
- 10.3** Access, cultural or environmental considerations
- 10.4** A clothing and equipment list for both individuals and the group
- 10.5** A weather forecast and implications for the proposed trip
- 10.6** Risk and hazard identification and management
- 10.7** Emergency contacts and procedures
- 10.8** Intentions form

11. Instruct a group in the abseil skills required for a positive introductory experience

The candidate will provide clients with effective instruction in the following abseil skills:

- 11.1** Fitting of harnesses and helmets
- 11.2** Movement from the safe zone, and attachment to the abseil and safety ropes
- 11.3** Use of abseil device
- 11.4** Safe and efficient abseil technique
- 11.5** What to do at the bottom of the abseil

The candidate will use:

- 11.6** A logical sequence of progressions
- 11.7** Clear demonstrations and explanations