

**UKSS Sidecountry Snowsport Leader Award Syllabus**

**Sidecountry Snowsport Leader (SSL)**

The SSL is licenced to lead parties, on and off-piste within a patrolled ski resort. All off piste descents should be accessible from the lift without a hike or skinning. These descents should lead directly to mechanical uplift. The area and terrain & conditions chosen for the activity should be such that allows the group to thrive in the environment as opposed to survive in it.

**Candidates must prove their competency in the following criteria:**

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| Crit.  No. |  | **Sidecountry Snowsport Leader** |
| **1** | **Fitness Fuel & Hydration** | |
| 1.1 | Demonstrate a suitable level of physical fitness to lead journeys for a range of groups in terrain appropriate to their award | Full day skiing/riding on and off-piste in lift accessed terrain with a Leaders Rucksack |
| 1.2 | Maintain their energy levels by adequate fueling and hydrating throughout their journey | Throughout a day’s lift access off-piste skiing/riding |
| 1.3 | Have an understanding of the nutritional demands their journeys place on their group and be aware of skiers/riders fuel and fluid intake | Relating to a day’s lift access off-piste skiing/riding |
| 1.4 | Have an understanding of the physiological demands their journeys place on their group including the required components of fitness and energy systems used. | Relating to a day’s lift access off-piste skiing/riding |
| **2** | **Personal Skiing/Riding Standards**  These standards are such to allow the leader to maintain a broad attentional focus for the majority of the planned journey, accepting information from the snowpack/weather; terrain and the group to effectively manage the group. | |
| 2.1 | Minimum Standard required in red run angled terrain (250) in favourable off-piste conditions. | **Speed.** Demonstrate a variety of speeds to inspire confidence in a group from novice to expert and in a broad range of snow types.  **Line.** Demonstrate a variety of line choices to inspire confidence in a group from novice to expert and in a broad range of snow types.  **Flow.** Demonstrate fluency & ease in ski performance in a variety of snow conditions; speeds and lines, both in personal performance and whilst leading groups. |
| **3** | **Skiing/Riding Technique knowledge and application in Leadership context** | |
| 3.1 | Identifying rider/skier skillset and drawing conclusions regarding route choice and management of the group | Identify whether rider/skier has control of speed and line. Adjust situation accordingly. |
| 3.2 | Knowledge of technically correct execution of ski/board techniques relevant to their award | Relevant to off-piste skiing in a variety of snow conditions |
| 3.3 | Apply their knowledge to achieve desired outcomes. | Achieve a flowing journey; allow for a wide variety of leadership styles to be used |
| 3.4 | Snowsports Touring Disciplines | Awareness of other Snowsport touring disciplines: alpine touring; telemark and snowboard. |
| **4** | **Clothing and Equipment** | |
| 4.1 | Carry sufficient equipment and tools for the planned terrain; conditions and group needs | Recognising the proximity of resort infrastructure |
| 4.2 | Have a working knowledge of a variety of current equipment and systems relevant to award | Recognising the proximity of resort infrastructure |
| 4.3 | Show and awareness of the main developments in recent Snowsport technology relevant to award | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 4.4 | Use suitable equipment for the planned task and wear appropriate clothing for a leader as a role model. | Recognising the proximity of resort infrastructure |
| **5** | **Ski Tech & Far From Help Repairs**  Demonstrate how to effectively perform appropriate repairs relevant to the environment of the award | |
| 5.1 | Binding Check | Knowledge of current binding systems. Flag potential problems and direct to ski technician. |
| 5.2 | Binding/Ski/Board/Skin Repair | Have knowledge of where to go to source expert help to repair damage to equipment |
| **6** | **Leadership & Group Management**  Demonstrate the ability to lead & manage the group appropriately within the scope of the award | |
| 6.1 | The leader is a positive role model and aims to inspire others, establishing an agreed vision with the group. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 6.2 | The leader provides empathetic social support in a positive atmosphere | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 6.3 | The leader looks to provide appropriately challenging experiences | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 6.4 | The leader can safely use participant focused leadership styles | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 6.5 | The leader provides satisfaction and promotes strong performance for individuals and the group. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 6.6 | fostering environmental awareness. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 6.7 | maintaining involvement, interest and enjoyment. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding |
| 6.8 | imparting fundamental technical skills where appropriate. | To facilitate a safe experience |
| 6.9 | demonstrate the personal skills and organisation to remain comfortable in the mountains in winter. | Including the use of resort infrastructure |
| 6.10 | organise search and rescue for a lost member of the group. | As appropriate to an off-piste area within a patrolled ski resort. |
| 6.11 | identify and minimise the risks created by the following hazards: loose and verglassed rock; snow bridges above streams and boulder fields; cornices; avalanche prone slopes; strong winds. | Seek advice from ski patrol to identify and avoid potential hazards |
| 6.12 | Use attentional focus model and catastrophe model effectively to manage own and group’s focus and psychological state | In a leadership context |
| 6.13 | Make good judgements in the best interests of the group | As appropriate to an off-piste area within a patrolled ski resort. |
| **7** | **Snow & Avalanche Knowledge/Skills**  **Candidates should be able to, using a combination of information sources and personal observations, continually evaluate the terrain, snowpack, weather conditions and human factors to draw sensible educated conclusions regarding avalanche hazard and risk:** | |
| 7.1 | identifying sources of avalanche information. Including BAA. | Mountain weather forecast  SAIS forecast |
| 7.2 | identifying the types of avalanche common in the UK. | identifying the types of avalanche common in the UK. |
| 7.3 | identifying common snowpack and grain types such as neve, graupel. etc. | Recognise different density layers within the snowpack and their relevance to decision making |
| 7.4 | identifying how a change in weather conditions affects the snowpack. | Understand the effects of prolonged cold weather; sudden thaws; wind  Transportation and precipitation. |
| 7.5 | understanding the significance of the published avalanche hazard forecasts on mountain travel and applying them. | Including information gained from ski patrol within the resort |
| 7.6 | understanding how avalanche hazard is influenced by weather conditions, and terrain and its importance when planning your journey | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.7 | understanding how avalanche risk is influenced by people (human factors) and its importance when planning your journey. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.8 | differentiating between situations of significant avalanche danger and those of limited avalanche danger. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.9 | demonstrating the ability to plan a safe/appropriate route according to the conditions the terrain and the group. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.10 | demonstrating an ability to continually appraise snowpack stability, weather and human factors and terrain whilst journeying. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.11 | identifying possible wind slab and cornice formation on a particular slope as a result of snowfall intensity and wind direction. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.12 | interpreting snowpack and possible stability using a variety of field observations. | Recognising differences between forecast and observations during the journey or key places. |
| 7.14 | stating the actions to be taken if involved in an avalanche incident and organising a rescue & recovery for those buried in an avalanche using Transceiver; Shovel; Probe and other commonly carried equipment. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.15 | Be able to predict where good skiing/boarding conditions will be located | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 7.17 | Avalanche Rescue | Identify a single burial in under 4 mins using Transceiver Shovel and Probe in an area approx. 50m x 50m.  Have the experience and teaching skills to deliver the 15min TSP protocol |
| **8** | **Route Planning & Navigation**  Navigation on skis/board in winter can be very difficult and requires considerable practice. In addition to being able to navigate effectively in good visibility, in poor conditions, including darkness and whiteout, candidates should be able to safely and efficiently: | |
| 8.1 | Be proficient at planning and executing flowing journeys within the environment relevant to the award/ conditions/group | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 8.2 | Identify their location by appropriate means at all times, using a map and compass. | Using descriptors and landmarks of surrounding terrain |
| 8.3 | Describe a range of navigational aids that can be useful at the planning stage as well as on the journey | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 8.4 | demonstrate a practical awareness of the use, and limitations, of electronic navigation devices such as GPS, Smartphones etc. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 8.5 | relate map to ground using either 1:25,000, 1:50,000 and other relevant scale maps, including piste maps. | Proficiency using piste maps and awareness of OS maps and equivalent |
| 8.6 | choose appropriate safe and efficient routes/navigation strategies between geographical features in poor conditions. | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 8.8 | take and follow accurate compass bearings while skiing/boarding in poor conditions. | Use compass to orientate map |
| 8.9 | demonstrate navigational techniques appropriate to poor conditions. | Within the patrolled environment, using resort infrastructure |
| **9** | **Mountain Weather** | |
| 9.1 | Have a working knowledge of weather in mountainous environments and its effect on the group | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 9.2 | Obtain relevant weather forecasts | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| **10** | **Incident Management** | |
| 10.1 | Select and use appropriate personal and group emergency equipment | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 10.2 | Be able to effectively organise rescue within the environment of the award | Making use of resort infrastructure |
| 10.3 | Be fully aware of rescue timescales and stages involved | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| 10.4 | Describe factors to consider to ensure late back procedures are robust | Relevant to off-piste skiing/riding within a resort environment |
| **11** | **Cold Weather Injuries**  Candidates should understand the causes and be able to avoid the physiological injuries that can occur in cold, wet and freezing conditions. They should take precautions to avoid injuries but, failing that, be able to identify the signs and symptoms and then apply first aid to treat the following: | |
| 11.1 | Mountain Hypothermia | Have knowledge of preventative measures. Identify signs; symptoms & management |
| 11.2 | Frostnip & frost bite | Have knowledge of preventative measures. Identify signs; symptoms & management |
| 11.3 | Heat Disorders | Have knowledge of preventative measures. Identify signs; symptoms & management |
| 11.4 | Snow blindness | Have knowledge of preventative measures. Identify signs; symptoms & management |
| 11.5 | Sunburn | Have knowledge of preventative measures. Identify signs; symptoms & management |
| **12** | **Access; the Environment and Legal Liabilities.** | |
| 12.1 | Accessing Ski Resorts | Have a working knowledge of the resort’s rules; guidelines and principles for Snowsports Users |
| 12.4 | Legal Liabilities | Understand the responsibilities of a group leader; the roles of insurance and duty of care, and maintaining currency. |
| **13** | **Snowsport Knowledge** | |
| 13.1 | Describe main characteristics of various Snowsport disciplines, including competitive freeride skiing. | Be able to offer advice and signpost information |