

CROSS COUNTRY PROFICIENCY AWARDS TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

At 1* & 2* there are individual awards for classic and skating, which combine to form the full award. This means skiers can start with either classic or skating, and progressively develop their skills to achieve the full award at each level, or they can learn both styles simultaneously and go for the full award at each level. From 3* onwards there is a single award at each level which requires both classic and skating skills.

1*	Classic	Skate	Full
2*	Classic	Skate	Full
3*	Full		
4*	Full		
5*	Full		

This modular approach at 1* & 2* aims to make it easier for skiers to enter the scheme by giving them the choice to focus on learning one technique at a time or, if preferred, to learn both techniques simultaneously. This applies on snow or on roller skis.

1* should encourage beginner and very novice skiers to progress further with Cross country skiing. The skills required are those which enable them to ski comfortably and safely in easy terrain.

- 1* classic
- 1* skate
- 1* full

2* is aimed at improver Cross country skiers. It introduces the basic classic, skating and xc downhill skills. It both equips a skier to ski comfortably in moderate terrain, and provides a foundation for further development of Cross country skiing

- 2* (Classic) - candidates are 2* standard for classic and general skills. It is for those who prefer to focus on classic skiing, or those who are unable to learn or demonstrate basic skate because, for example, some holiday resorts do not cut skating tracks or provide suitable equipment for skating.
- 2* (Skate) – candidates are at 2* standard for skating and general skills. It is for those who prefer to focus on skate skiing on snow or on roller skis.

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- 2* (Full) – candidates are at 2* standard for classic, skate and general skills. It combines the Classic and Skate modules and provides the foundation for further progression through the Awards.

3* is aimed at competent intermediate skiers. It covers the spectrum of techniques for roller skiing and for cross country skiing on prepared tracks. It requires competence and correct basic techniques and ability to tackle varying terrain without undue hesitation. It provides the technical skills required for the Level 1 Cross Country (XC) Coaching Award.

4* is for advanced skiers. Skiers should be able to perform these skills correctly and effectively, adapting to varying terrain and snow conditions. It provides the technical skills required for the Level 2 XC Coaching Award.

5* is an expert level and the skier should be an excellent performer in all aspects of XC, skiing fluently and easily throughout in varying terrain and snow conditions. It provides the technical skills required for the Level 3 XC Coaching Award.

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One Star

1*	Skill required	
	Classic	Skate
Overall	Able to stand on skis and move around safely in balanced, stable and relaxed position with flexed ankles and knees. Able to move forward steadily on the flat and slightly uphill, and to stop on a gentle downhill.	
Basic knowledge of equipment and suitable clothing	Emphasis on safety Snow – layers of clothing according to conditions & activity, hat & gloves, eye protection, sun protection. Roller ski – helmet, knee & elbow protection, eye protection, gloves.	
Stand safely	Snow – skis in plough or parallel position and poles slightly in front of body, slightly flexed ankles and knees. Rollers – skis parallel, weight forward, poles slightly in front of body, flexed ankles and knees.	
Glide/roll straight down gentle slope	In tracks and out of tracks on groomed slope, or on tarmac. Relaxed posture with weight over centre of feet and arms forward of body.	In track and out of tracks on groomed slope, or on tarmac. Relaxed posture with weight over centre of feet and arms forward of body.
Forward movement on flat terrain	Striding rhythmically forward keeping skis parallel and using poles to assist forward motion with leading arm and leg always diagonally opposite.	Gliding rhythmically forward from one ski to the other, keeping skis angled in a V shape, and using poles simultaneously to assist forward motion.
Double pole	Propulsion forwards with controlled use of poles; skis parallel, poles angled backwards and kept parallel; using weight through poles by compressing slightly through body with slightly bent (flexed) leg.	
Herringbone	Walk up gentle slope in herringbone, with skis angled evenly, and poles used lightly in time with opposite legs.	
Star turn	Star turns with small even steps; able to turn around tips and around tails.	
Side step	Balanced steps with relaxed posture keeping skis parallel and at 90° to fall line. Able to step side to side on flat, and up and down gentle slope, using poles in time with skis.	
Braking - On snow	Skis kept in v shape with tips slightly apart, weight equally distributed, use of edges and ski angle to control speed. Able to stop on a gentle slope and stay balanced over skis with correct posture throughout and some flexion in ankles and knees, hands held in front.	
Braking - on Roller skis, either by rolling onto grass or snowplough	Able to direct skis onto grass on flat, and stay balanced by putting one foot forward; to slow skis by adopting rollerski snowplough position – widen stance and push rear of skis out, keeping rollerskis flat and front wheels wide apart.	
Importance of warming up before skiing	Understand the need to warm up and start skiing slowly.	

Two Star

2*	Skill required			
	Classic		Skate	
EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING				
Overall knowledge	Based on skiing in moderate terrain, probably with hired skis. Need to be aware of appropriate clothing for their activity			
Knowledge of clothing	Awareness of suitable clothing for skiing in winter mountain conditions, or roller skiing in various conditions: use of appropriate fabrics, layers, wind and waterproofs; need for gloves, hat or helmet; knee/elbow/body protection and sunglasses or eye protection.			
Knowledge of equipment	Snow: Skis, boots and poles: Should be able to equip themselves from hire shop, i.e. awareness of different types of skis (skate, classic, waxless) , boots and poles for classic and skating, and how to select correct sizes of skis and poles Rollerskis: awareness of classic, skate and combi skis and boots, able to select pole length			
Knowledge of waxing (on snow)	Understanding of waxing including purpose of grip and glide wax, selection and application of appropriate everyday waxes. Classic: able to apply basic grip wax and glide wax. Skate: able to apply glide wax.			
SKIING		Classic		Skate
Overall skiing	Moves confidently around moderate terrain with correct coordination of arms and leg. Beginning to develop weight transfer, with flexion of ankles, knees, hips and elbows. Rhythmic strides with arms and legs working together. Ski compression and rear heel lift on each cycle.		Moves confidently around moderate terrain and able to skate on flat and slight uphill. Developing weight transfer and angulation of skis with ankle, knee, hip and elbow flex. Forward movement generated by transferring weight from one leg to the other, with some angulation in ankles and knees, and synchronised arm/leg action	
Moving up gentle hill or against resistance (eg slow snow, headwind)	Diagonal stride uphill	Short strides with sufficient weight transfer to enable positive drive down and synchronised arm movement. Body weight over centre of ski.	Skate 1	Synchronised arm and leg actions; poles planted asymmetrically in time with lead ski. Lead pole planted to push up hill, other pole held lower and slightly offset. Ankles flexed and sufficient weight transfer to allow propulsion from each ski.

Climbing hills	Herringbone	Skis angled outwards and edged into the snow with flexed ankles and bodyweight over the centre of the skis, Opposite arm and leg coordinated each stride, pole and foot landing together making a stable platform for the next step up.	Herringbone Skate	As for classic herringbone, with each stride making a small glide.
Forward movement on flat/slight uphill	Double pole kick	Correct coordination and timing of both kick and recovery leg and arms (can execute on one side at a time). Flexion of both knee and hip on glide ski.	Skate 2	Correct timing of arms and legs: one drive of poles with each leg. Symmetrical pole plants and glide phases, with body facing forward along track. Some compression and extension on each glide.
Forward movement on the flat as speed increases	Double pole	Smooth arm action with well flexed elbows on pole plant and partial body drop with flexion of ankles and knees and abdominal compression.	Free skate	Balanced symmetrical skating action without the use of poles, and
Overtaking/avoiding obstacles	Exit track	Able to step safely out of tracks at gentle speed (include a look back to check not stepping in front of other skiers).	Overtake	Able to move around another skier/obstacle at gentle speed (include a look back to check not stepping in front of other skiers).
URNS & BRAKING				
Overall	Good posture – flexed ankles, relaxed body, hands held forward and low, looking forward. Able to cope with changes of speed and direction. Good control on moderate downhill.			
Skate turn	Body facing direction travel around corner. Definite push-off from outer ski and smooth recovery, co-ordinated use of poles.			
Step turn	Slight lowering of body posture. Positive step and placement of inside ski to,lead the turn, with effective weight transfer and smooth recovery of other ski. Poles held safely/used to assist weight transfer/forward drive.			
Side step on moderate slope	Slight lowering of body posture and edging of skis into snow, standing square across the fall line. Able to step up and down hill, with positive lift and placement of inside ski, effective weight transfer and smooth recovery of other ski and pole.			
Half snowplough (on snow)	Able to use half snowplough in moderate downhill loipe to control speed and stop. Controlled placement of plough ski out of track and replacement in track. Poles held in safe position. Flexed ankles, relaxed body and arms with hands held forward, looking forward, poles in safe position and not used to slow speed.			
Snowplough glide and brake (on snow)	Able to control speed and stop on moderate slope. Flexed ankles, relaxed body and arms with hands held forward, looking forward, poles in safe position and not used to slow speed.			
Snowplough turns (on snow)	Smooth flow from one controlled turn to the next on moderate slope. Maintain plough position throughout.			

Traverse (on snow)	Traverse moderate slope. Weight mainly on lower ski, with upper foot slightly forward and hands forward over lower ski
Roller ski brake by rolling onto grass	Able to brake on the flat or gentle slope by rolling onto grass with one foot forward, and maintain balance as skis stop.
Roller ski snowplough	Able to slow skis at gentle pace on slight slope by pushing out rear of roller skis, keeping skis flat. Slight flexion in ankles



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Three, Four and Five Star

SKILL	3*	4*	5*
EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING			
Overall knowledge	Based on skiing in medium terrain, potentially on their own equipment. Sufficient knowledge to advise novice skiers.	Based on active skiing in varied terrain; skiers likely to have own classic and skating equipment. Able to advise intermediate skiers.	Expert knowledge for skiing at all paces in varied terrain, including track skiing up to race level. Able to advise skiers at any levels including basic requirements of off track Nordic touring
Knowledge of clothing	As 2* but skiing more actively so needs greater understanding of flexibility in clothing.	As 3* but for more active paced skiing.	Knowledge of clothing for skiing for training and at race pace, Understanding of clothing for touring.
Knowledge of equipment	Skis, boots and poles: Sound knowledge of different types of track ski , able to select correct sizes for classic and skating. Rollerskis; knowledge of different ski types, body and wheel materials. Able to select correctly sized poles for classic and skate	Skis, boots and poles: Knowledge of appropriate equipment for 4* ski techniques; understanding of equipment sizing and set-up including positioning of bindings. Rollerskis: knowledge of different types and speeds of skis, and appropriate usage. Good knowledge of maintenance of equipment, awareness of repair methods	Skis, boots, poles: thorough understanding of correct ski/binding/boot/pole and other equipment choice for different types of skiing, for all skiers from novice to advanced. Knowledge of correct equipment: sizes, choice of camber, sidecut, base type, etc;.

Skill	3*	4*	5*
Knowledge of waxing	Understanding of and competence in basic waxing techniques: knowledge of waxes for different conditions, position of grip wax zone on classic skis and of application of glide and grip waxes.	Up-to-date knowledge of range and application of grip and glide waxes, Able to apply appropriate wax for activity and conditions. Awareness of base preparation and structuring.	Knowledge of how to acquire and maintain an adequate wax box and equipment, and choice of wax for different activities. Thorough knowledge of base choice and preparation (e.g. stone grinding) good knowledge of glide wax types, correct choice for conditions (e.g. HF versus LF), proper application and finishing, use of additives and finishes (e.g. powders), creation of base structure (e.g. rilling). For grip waxes, thorough knowledge of types of wax, correct selection and application and fault correction.



CLASSIC	3*	4*	5*
Overall level of skiing	Skis confidently over medium terrain, without undue hesitation. Achieves full weight transfer: able to remain on one ski to glide, and shows clear and well timed compression of new drive ski. Correct angulation of ankles, knees, hips, elbows, with a degree of body angulation and full range of movement of legs and arms. Able to stay in tracks round corners.	Skis fluently over varied terrain. Shows both static and dynamic balance on glide ski. Able to adapt tempo, range of movement, glide and power with changes in terrain and pace, responding with agility and showing smooth transitions between techniques. Able to stay in tracks on medium downhill sections and corner using body weight and angles appropriately	Makes skiing look easy with a high level of balance, agility, and relaxation on skis. Maintains technique on steep and variable terrain, at race pace and when fatigued. Able to switch lead/drive legs and techniques with seamless one phase transitions; to remain in tracks on fast downhills and corners. Can demonstrate ski techniques by skiing slowly with well defined movements and angles and minimal tension through the body. Able to break techniques down into phases and to stop the action at any stage
Diagonal Stride	Correct body alignment permitting static one leg balance and a clear glide phase. Full range of smooth movements of both arms and legs to generate forward momentum.	Fluent movements with only two phases in each cycle. Accurate, controlled and smooth placement of arms, poles and recovery leg.	Fluent and dynamic two phase action with accurate controlled and smooth placement of arms poles and recovery leg.
Diagonal stride uphill	Not required as specific skill – forms part of diagonal stride requirement	Not required as specific skill – forms part of diagonal stride requirement	Not required as specific skill – forms part of diagonal stride requirement
Double Pole	Full range of movement of arms with relaxed hands and shoulders. Poles planted with hands in front of baskets. Body weight rises and falls by compression/extension of ankles, knees, hips, abdominals.	Dynamic forward commitment of body weight, and poles planted well forward with flexed arms to generate power. Able to double pole uphill by altering tempo and range of movement. Able to demonstrate both new and old school techniques.	As for 4* plus effective adaptation of technique on variable terrain, and execution of perfect one phase transitions in and out of DP technique.

Double Pole Kick	Double pole action as above with well timed compression and drive off kick ski and a well balanced glide phase. Able to execute on alternate kick leg	As 3* plus a definite pre-loading of the kick ski and long drive from it. Able to alter technique according to terrain.	As for 4* plus Able to execute one phase transitions in and out of technique from both double pole and diagonal stride.
Exit track	Committed step out of track and onto new ski, smooth move back into track and committed step in with both skis. Able to do by stepping out parallel to tracks and by a skate move.	Fluent track change in 4 stages with correct timing of pole action, and clean and committed exit from tracks, to both sides. Able to respond to sudden need to change track.	As 4* plus able to complete cleanly in 3 stages with correct timing of pole plant. Able to adapt to snow conditions.
Herringbone and half herringbone	Herringbone: as 2* on medium hill, maintaining posture. Half herringbone: clean step with inside ski onto central area of track, maintain effective progress in half herringbone then smoothly replace ski in loipe; avoiding herringboning on loipe.	Herringbone: as 3*, on steep hill, also able to place each ski flat then roll onto inside edge. Half herringbone: as 3*, plus smooth transition to full herringbone outside loipe, then committed step back into loipe.	As 4* with seamless transition and no loss of forward momentum.

SKATE	3*	4*	5*
Overall	Full weight transfer on both sides with clear use of drive ski to generate power. Coordinated and full range arm/leg movement with correct angulation of joints, relaxed posture and slight forward lean of upper body. Able to use each technique appropriately on varied terrain.	<p>Good static and dynamic balance, strong forward commitment with full and sustained weight transfer, accurate and controlled placement of poles and recovery ski.</p> <p>Skis fluently and with agility on varied terrain: able to alter tempo, speed, glide length and the angle of attack of new glide ski, with smooth transitions between techniques.</p> <p>Able to alter lead ski on asymmetric techniques</p>	<p>Makes skating look easy with a high level of balance, agility, and relaxation on skis. Maintains technique on steep and variable terrain, at race pace and when fatigued. Able to switch lead/drive legs and techniques with seamless one phase transitions.</p> <p>Can demonstrate ski techniques by skiing at very slow pace with well defined movements and angles and minimal tension through the body. Able to break techniques down into phases and to stop the action at any stage.</p>
Herringbone skate	Rhythmical action with short glide phase on well angled skis. Correct timing (each pole planted with opposite ski)	Accurate placement of skis and poles with high degree of flexion in knees and ankles and clear steps up hill. Able to change tempo and cope with varied terrain with smooth transition in and out of technique	As 4* plus ability to maintain fluency on very steep hill, and in varied snow conditions.
Skate 1	Synchronized arm and leg actions; poles planted asymmetrically with the lead pole planted with lead ski and driving in direction of the glide ski. Full weight transfer, clear glide phase and generation of power from both arms and legs.	<p>Forward commitment with dynamic pole plant and drive off each ski; both skis placed flat. Hips and shoulders stable and facing forward along the track. Poles planted forward and offset, driving forwards rather than across the body.</p> <p>Able to adapt body angles, ski angles, tempo, speed and power to suit the terrain.</p>	<p>As 4*, also able to step leading ski forward with smooth accurate placement to obtain instant balance on new glide ski. Able to lead with both legs; and to adapt technique and tempo according to terrain.</p> <p>Able to climb steep hills maintaining technique.</p>

Skate 2	Correct timing of arms and legs: one drive of poles on each gliding leg. Symmetrical pole plants and glide phases, with body facing forward along track. Compression and extension of body on each glide.	As 3* with power through legs clearly generated by range of movement of ankles and knees while maintaining tall posture in each extension phase. Weight committed forward with poles planted dynamically, and well forward with flexed arms. Skis placed flat then edged to effect drive at conclusion of glide. Able to adapt glide phase, speed, tempo and ski angle according to terrain	As 4* plus strong dynamic generation of power. Able to climb medium gradients, changing speed and tempo according to terrain
Skate 3	One symmetrical arm action for each full leg cycle. Full effective arm swing with extended glide on lead side. Placement of flat glide ski. Body compresses on lead side with pole plant, and extends upwards on recovery side so only one extension phase per full leg cycle.	As for 3* with an active arm recovery in time with recovery leg. High degree of ankle and knee flexion, and compression to begin drive, giving a definite drive off each leg and maintaining speed throughout cycle. Able to lead on each side, and to adapt tempo and patterns of glide to suit the terrain and snow conditions.	As 4* plus dynamic recovery and extended glide on non-lead side. Able to change tempo according to terrain; and to maintain skate 3 up and down hill. Able to carry out with symmetrical and assymetrical pole recovery before symmetrical plant.
Free Skate	Balanced symmetrical skating action without the use of poles. Stable upper body facing direction of travel.	Extended glide on both skis with varied body position. Able to use arms both in synch with leg action and held static. Able to climb gentle gradients	As 4* plus ability to ski effectively in both low and upright stance, and up and downhill.

Turns and braking	3*	4*	5*
Overall	Good posture and able to adapt to terrain. Remaining balanced over ski with changes of speed and direction. Good control on medium hills and corners.	Very good posture maintained throughout. Able to respond to terrain with agility and changes of speed, direction and power. Good control on steep hills, and able to corner at speed.	Excellent posture maintained throughout, adapting seamlessly to changes of speed direction and power. Able to corner at speed without losing forward momentum. Able to use poles effectively in times with turns.
Skate turn	Turns to both left and right on a gentle gradient. Definite edging of outer ski with glide and drive. Controlled/unrushed un-weighting and placement of both skis. (Inside ski placed at appropriate new angle, outside ski placed close, although not quite parallel to inside ski).	Both skis edged, with fast foot movements, and body in state of dynamic balance with centre of gravity falling inside the position of both feet. Able to execute both with and without the use of poles, also effective use of poles to add power and to balance.	As 4* plus ability to ski high-speed figure-of-eight turns and to skate turn up and down hill. Able to vary angle of ski placement.
Step turn	Controlled and accurate Placement of flat skis showing Able to stand comfortably on one ski.	Able to execute at reasonable speeds with fast foot action and small steps and increased lower body joint angles throughout turn. Smooth transition into skate turn.	Able to maintain step turns at fast pace and downhill, with seamless transition into skate turn.
Side step on hill	On medium hill, as 2* plus appropriate angulation of body relative to hill, with effective use of edges.	On steep hill: as 3*, maintaining smooth and effective movement.	As 4* plus able to carry out cleanly in various snow conditions (deep/icy/uneven).



Kick turn	As 2* on medium hill with effective use of ski edges as well as poles.	As 3* on steep hill and in varied snow conditions (deep/icy/uneven)	As 4*, also able to execute on hill without poles.
Half snowplough	As 2* on medium hill, with appropriate flexion and effective pressuring,. Able to make a controlled stop. Able to execute on both sides.	As 3* on steep hill and to stop at predetermined point.	As 4* - able to use in varied snow conditions and to execute hard stop on request.
Snowplough glide and brake	Good relaxed and effective position. Able to use snowplough to control speed on medium slope and to make a controlled stop	As 3* plus ability to stop at predetermined place and to execute effectively in varied snow conditions (groomed, soft).	As 4* on steep slope
Snowplough turns	Correct relaxed body position; Able to turn left and right at predetermined points and to control radius of turn.	Fluent turns with extension of body before turn, outer foot rotated in direction of travel, compression of legs basic edge control; Able to link smooth, rounded turns.	As 4* in varied snow conditions
Stem turns (4* and 5*)	Not required	Clear stem turns with outer leg driving the turn and inner leg brought cleanly in to parallel position by end of turn, finishing in traverse position. Able to execute to either side.	Able to execute in varied snow conditions, and to carry out a flowing sequence of left and right turns.

Traverse with step up stop	Stable position with head and shoulders facing downhill, upper ski slightly forward; lower ski weighted. Traverse medium slope, with skis making clearly edged parallel tracks. Able to stop by stepping up hill to either side.	As 3* holding line and posture on steep slopes. Step up stop controlled and smooth with balance held throughout.	As 4* and able to execute in variable snow conditions.
Emergency stop (4 & 5*)	Not required	“Hockey stop” from snowplough, with well timed pole plant and inner ski cleanly brought round and edged. Able to execute to either side	“Hockey stop” from parallel, with both skis cleanly brought round and edged. Able to execute to either side, with and without use of poles.
Rollerski brake by rolling onto grass and emergency stop onto grass (4* and 5*)	Able to brake in a controlled way a slope by rolling onto grass with one foot forward, maintaining balance as skis stop	Emergency stop: Able to brake by rolling onto grass at some speed, and maintain balance by carrying forward motion into running steps	Emergency stop: Able to brake by rolling onto grass at high speed, in response to command.
Rollerski snowplough (3*); stepping snowplough (4* and 5*)	Able to slow skis on a moderate slope. Pushing out the rear of the roller skis maintaining a flat ski at all times. Ski poles must be in a safe position, and not used to aid the slowing of the skis. Tips of skis must be closer than tails, overall wide stance is acceptable.	Snowplough: as 3* Stepping snowplough: on flat or gently sloping ground stepping alternately with skis angled as for snowplough, maintaining strong angulation of knees and ankles to clearly slow skis within a few step. Poles held in safe position.	Stepping snowplough: on medium hill stepping alternately with skis angled as for snowplough, maintaining strong angulation of knees and ankles to clearly slow skis within a few step. Poles held in safe position.