

Procedures for Officers, Committee members, and Members of Oxford University Mountaineering Club

The Oxford University Mountaineering Club (“The OUMC” or “The Club”) is affiliated to the British Mountaineering Council (BMC), and complies with the BMC guidelines for mountaineering and climbing clubs.

1. Aims and Objectives

1. To organise climbing trips in the UK during term time for both University members and affiliated members of the public.
2. To provide a network of climbers within the University to meet each other socially, or in a climbing environment.
3. To offer University members with little or no climbing experience the opportunity to try climbing either indoors or outdoors, in the company of experienced climbers.

2. Health and Safety

1. The OUMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.
2. The OUMC has completed a formal risk assessment of all club activities, and this has been inspected by the Area Safety Officer (Sport). The process of risk assessment is an ongoing one, and every club activity will be examined individually by members of the current committee.
3. The OUMC strongly recommends that all members wear UIAA approved helmets and harnesses while climbing or in the immediate vicinity of the crag. The Club does not encourage solo climbing on any club event, and urges members to be sensible on trips and climb within their ability.
4. It is essential for participants to have sufficient warm clothing, food, and water on club trips, and it is the responsibility of the participant to ensure this is the case.
5. Participants should not overlook the importance of a correct warm-up session before climbing in preventing injuries.
6. Participants in mountaineering and full-day rock climbs are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the special guidelines in the ‘Special Guidelines for Mountaineering’ section, and be aware of rescue procedures.
7. Indoor climbing, whilst being significantly safer than outdoor climbing, still poses risks and all participants are required to pay due attention to those risks, particularly when surrounded by the distraction of a busy and sociable environment. Particular attention is drawn to the Club's indoor bouldering wall, where all users are strongly encouraged to

use appropriate crash-mats, and make use of spotters whenever possible. The use of mats does not eliminate the risk of serious injury.

3. Training and Coaching

1. The OUMC recommends that all novice climbers attend the Freshers' meet at the beginning of Michaelmas Term, or one of the regular club climbing wall sessions before attending one of the club's weekend trips. This will enable them to become familiar with the techniques of roped climbing in a comparatively safe environment.
2. The OUMC is a collection of friends, providing a network of climbers within the University and the opportunities for weekend climbing from Oxford. Those perceived of as 'in charge' are not necessarily qualified, do not need to be qualified, and are not regarded by the OUMC nor regard themselves as 'technical experts', but are amateur climbers with some experience who are happy to impart their knowledge. Any advice given should be viewed with this in mind by the recipient.
3. The Club will offer no formal training or instruction to novice climbers, other than the opportunity to be introduced to the sport by more experienced climbers.
4. The OUMC has a limited budget with which to subsidise members who wish to attend a recognised training course in climbing, mountaineering, or first aid. Such training courses may be organised by the club, and are provided by paid instructors with the appropriate insurance.

4. Special Guidelines for Mountaineering

1. Participants should realise that long routes on mountains in The British Isles often present serious mountaineering challenges which require a different approach to climbs of a similar standard on valley crags.
2. The OUMC strongly encourages members to climb well within their capabilities, and to be prepared for sudden changes in the weather. Participants must be capable of organising their own retreat from complicated mountain faces. Participants should also be prepared to perform first aid and/or rescue procedures when outside help is unavailable.
3. The OUMC recommends that climbers do not undertake long mountaineering routes unless they have the experience and judgment to ensure their own safety. It is also suggested that climbers do not undertake such routes unless they are in the company of someone with experience and knowledge of the local area and descent routes.
4. The OUMC strongly recommends that at least one pack is carried up mountaineering routes per climbing pair. This should contain spare clothing, map, compass, emergency rations, and footwear for the descent. A torch *must* be carried by *all* climbers on long mountain routes that may involve a long or complicated descent.
5. Participants must normally ensure that at least four other people on the trip know which route they are attempting, and how they intend to descend. All participants *must* arrange a time and place where *all* people involved in the trip will meet at the end of the day and it is the responsibility of each participant to ensure that their own plans are known.

6. The OUMC recommend that where possible, mobile phones are carried on mountaineering routes. All climbers carrying mobile phones should carry a list of phone numbers of *all* other mobiles being carried by club members. A list of *all* relevant mobile numbers must also be left on the dashboard of the minibus in a position where it can be read through the windscreen from outside.
7. Participants in trips to mountainous regions are encouraged to be aware of where the other club members are climbing on each day.

5. Mountain Rescue Procedures

1. In the case of an accident occurring on any climb, and people knowing the nature and location of the accident, Mountain Rescue (MR) should be alerted immediately by contacting the local Police.
2. Action should be taken if climbers have failed to return to the agreed meeting point a reasonable time after the agreed meeting time. The length of this time period will depend on time of day, weather conditions, and other factors.
3. Participants considering initiating a rescue, who are not in the company of the rest of club members on the trip, should first attempt to make contact with other club members to inform them of their own safety. The suspected missing climbers may have done the same from elsewhere.
4. Once the safety and location of all but the suspected missing climbers has been established, the Police should be contacted. As many details as possible should be at hand, including the names and ages of the missing climber(s), intended routes of ascent and descent, expected return time, what equipment they had with them as well as the caller's own name, location and contact number. The caller should then remain at the scene of the 999 call or proceed as directed by the emergency operator.
5. Other club members should remain at a known location, preferably somewhere they can be contacted by phone/mobile. The Police must be made aware of this location and any relevant contact number.
6. If Mountain Rescue are called out, they will first ensure the safety and whereabouts of all other club members before initiating a rescue. It is usual for one club member to liaise with the MR team and help them co-ordinate the rescue.
7. Following any involvement of the emergency services, the senior committee member on the meet, or any other suitable participant should ensure that the University Security Services are informed of the accident and that the relevant details and plan of action are passed.

6. General Accident Procedures

1. A complete list of all University members attending a club trip will be left with the University Sports Department on the trip's departure using the Trip Registration Form.

2. All accidents or near-misses must be reported using the appropriate form and handed in to the Sports Department reception. This is the responsibility of committee members on the meet.
3. The University Security Services should be contacted in the case of any incident involving members of the Club where Police, Ambulance, Fire Service, or press involvement occurs. They can be contacted at any time on 01865 289999.

7. First Aid

1. The OUMC encourages participants on club meets to bring first aid kits, and ensure they are accessible at the crag. By signing up for an outdoor meet, participants acknowledge that they will not expect the club to provide first aid equipment.
2. The OUMC encourages all participants to undergo suitable first-aid training with a recognised organisation.

8. Climbing Meets and Minibus Drivers

1. All club members will receive full details of club trips by post or email in the week before the trip. Details will also be posted on the Club's website.
2. For weekend meets, at least two minibus drivers will normally be in attendance. Apart from in exceptional circumstances, these drivers will have passed the recommended minibus driving assessment.
3. All participants in outdoor climbing meets will be required to sign the Club's sign-up list before the meet takes place. By doing this, a participant acknowledges that he/she has read, understood, and accepted the club's participation statement and Code of Conduct.

9. Equipment

1. The OUMC has a small stock of safety equipment including harnesses, helmets, belay devices, ice axes, and crampons. These are available for loan by club members on request, and can be borrowed during term time or the vacations.
2. This equipment is looked after by the Gear Reps, who are two annually elected members of the OUMC committee. By accepting the loan of club equipment, members acknowledge that they are sufficiently competent and experienced to use the equipment safely, and to verify the condition of the equipment before use. It is then the responsibility of the individual member to check the condition of loaned equipment before he/she uses it. Any defects should be promptly reported to the Gear Reps who will inspect the equipment and retire it if necessary. Any significant trauma to club equipment, e.g. a major fall or impact, *must* be reported to the Gear Reps upon its return.
3. The Gear Reps will keep an equipment inventory and a copy will be forwarded to the Area Safety Officer (Sport) as soon as the club reforms in Michaelmas term. External kit inspections will be made periodically by a person agreed with the Area Safety Officer (Sport).

4. Static abseil ropes which are owned by the Club may be borrowed only by experienced members of the club who are sufficiently capable and experienced to verify the condition of the rope before use. These ropes may be used on club trips by, or under the instruction of, these experienced club members.
5. Dynamic lead ropes which are owned by the Club may be used by any club member at indoor climbing walls only. These ropes shall be the responsibility of the club's Gear Rep and, in the case of these ropes being used indoors by inexperienced members, he/she will be responsible for verifying their condition.
6. Dynamic lead ropes which are owned by the Club will not be used on outdoor club meets, except by experienced and capable members with the special permission of one of the Club's officers.
7. The OUMC expects participants to provide equipment such as warm clothing, appropriate footwear, tents, and sleeping bags for themselves on all outdoor meets.
8. On club trips, equipment such as ropes and lead protection will be provided by the experienced club members who are present on the trip. It is the responsibility of these members to ensure that their own personal equipment is in good condition and correct working order.
9. The OUMC owns a collection of climbing guidebooks to popular UK and world-wide destinations. These books may be borrowed by members of the Club for personal climbing trips, but must be returned to the Library immediately after the trip. Members are not permitted to borrow guidebooks for periods greater than ten days without the express prior permission of the OUMC Librarian or, if necessary, another member of the Committee. A replacement charge will be made for lost or excessively worn guidebooks.

10. Conduct of Individual Members

1. All club members are reminded to conduct themselves with the utmost responsibility at all times. Members should retain regard for safety and not endanger other people, whether they are members of the Club or of the general public.
2. The OUMC will actively avoid monopolising crags or routes when on club trips and, whenever possible, all climbing will be conducted in leader-second pairs.
3. Club members should not bring the OUMC or the name of the University of Oxford into disrepute.