



sportscotland  
**glenmorelodge**  
national outdoor training centre

# Ski Course Grading 2017

inspiring adventure



Ski Course Grades and Standards for  
Alpine Off Piste and Touring Courses.





# Ski Level/Technique

**Ski 1:** You are confident on blue pistes and enjoy skiing with smooth, rhythmic turns. On red runs you are capable of controlling your speed, speeding up and slowing down by altering the size and shape of your turns. Coping strategies such as side slipping and downhill kick turns may be familiar to you.

**Ski 2:** You have been skiing for several weeks/years and are now confident on blue and red runs, controlling your speed by changing the size of your turns. Black runs are challenging but you are capable of skiing them under control by using skiddy turns perhaps with the occasional step or jump. Skiing off-piste is a normal part of a days skiing but you are very much learning how to cope, but mostly remaining upright. Your turns shape and size off-piste are very much dependent on the type of snow and terrain.

**Ski 3:** You are a confident skier on red runs and enjoy playing with the terrain, skiing narrow corridors at the side and using the bumps to help start a new turn. When the slope gets steeper (up to but not exceeding 30 degrees/steep black runs) you are capable of looking ahead and identifying the line you intend to ski. You are also capable of adjusting your skiing so you can follow your intended route. In fresh snow, off-piste or when the bumps get larger you can still manage to make controlled progress using skids and side slips to cope.

**Ski 4:** You really enjoy skiing red and blacks runs with linked turns, confidently varying the width of your corridor to suit the conditions. As part of a normal days skiing you will venture off-piste, seeking

out powder snow or bumps to test you're skiing (including slopes up to 30 degrees) . In powder you are capable of making linked turns in a constant rhythm, leaving behind clear and uniform tracks. Bumps are still hard work but you managed to ski through them, using the shape of the terrain to help turn but do not yet have the ability to fluidly ski the falline. When the slopes go over 30 degrees; the snow gets heavy, or breakable crust, you have some well practised coping strategies, including a downhill kick turn; stem turns and jump turns.

**Ski 5:** You are now a regular skier and will ski several times a year, mixing piste and off-piste trips. You will ski the whole mountain and actively seek out challenging black runs to ski with flow and confidence from top to bottom, in all conditions. When there is fresh snow you are capable of skiing powder, varying your turn shape to adjust speed and line. Bumps and steep slopes, up to 35 degrees still require concentration but you manage this type of terrain happily. When things get steeper (up to 40 degrees) or the snow becomes crusty you can still cope but will be mixing lots of different techniques together.

**Ski 6:** You are a committed freerider regularly mixing ski touring and ski mountaineering to seek out challenging lines and descents. On open terrain you enjoy blending turn shapes and speed to ski large; fast; carving turns. When the terrain gets steeper and tighter (30 degrees - 45 degrees); you have a wide range of techniques and strategies which allow you to maintain the flow of a descent whilst remaining in control.





## Mountain Skills

**Mtn 1:** Experience of Ice Axe and Crampons is not necessary. Skiers should be well practiced in putting on and taking off skis on slopes in soft snow.

**Mtn 2:** Experience of using touring bindings and skins is necessary. Some experience of ice axe and crampons may be necessary. For skiers, coping techniques such as side slipping and stem turns are essential and should be well practiced and reliable. Uphill and down hill kick turns may be familiar but require further practice.

**Mtn 3:** Uphill kick turns, when touring should be fluid and reliable in both directions on hard snow up to 30 degrees. On alpine glacial tours a familiarity with harnesses and crevasse rescue techniques is desirable but not essential. Skiers will be comfortable transitioning between skis/skins and boots independently up to 30 degrees.

**Mtn 4:** These tours will encounter steep ground and previous experience of ice axe, crampons, harnesses and ropes is essential. Skiers will be expected to walk and climb slopes and mixed ground on foot up to 45 degrees, in both ascent and descent. Previous experience of moving together on a rope and abseiling or being lowered is advisable. Coping ski techniques such as side slipping, down hill kick turns and stem turns are essential and should be well practiced and reliable. Uphill kick turns, when touring should be fluid and reliable in both directions on hard snow up to 35 degrees. As these tours will include sustained periods of glacial travel, previous experience of crevasse rescue is required.



## Fitness

**Fit 1:** As a skier you are capable of skiing all day with regular rests without noticing a significant drop in your technique through fatigue. You are capable of hiking in soft snow with skis on your back or skinning uphill for 2 – 3 hours (600 – 800m). A moderately heavy rucksack 5 – 8kgs will be carried during your course.

**Fit 2:** All day skiing, with few stops or breaks. Off-piste skiing, top to bottom without the need for intermediate stops. Hiking and skinning for several hours at a time with a height gain of 800 – 1000m and be active for 6 – 8 hours per day. This uphill effort will have no significant detrimental effect on your downhill performance and you will be comfortable carrying a moderately heavy rucksack of 8kgs.

**Fit 3:** Sustained skiing all day with only short breaks with enough energy and stamina to maintain performance. Hiking, skinning and touring for up 8 – 10 hours per day with a potential height gain of up to 1200m+ at a steady pace of 400m/hour. Carrying a heavy rucksack of 8-10kgs is not an inconvenience and does not hamper your ski technique.



# Ski Course Grading 2017



Course Name: Scotland	General Grade	Ski	Mtn	Fit
Intro Ski Touring	Intro	2	1	1
Improver Ski Touring	Intermediate	2	2	2
Guided Ski Touring	Intermediate/Advanced	2	2	2
Intro Off Piste	Intro	1	1	1
Improver Off Piste	Intermediate	2	1	1
Advanced Off Piste –riding the steeps	Intermediate/Advanced	3	1	2
Avalanche Awareness	Intermediate	2	2	1
Navigation for Tourers and Freeriders	Intermediate	2	2	1
Glacial Travel and Crevasse Rescue	Intermediate	2	2	1
Ropework for Tourers and Freeriders	Intermediate	2	2	1



Course Name: International	General Grade	Ski	Mtn	Fit
Introduction to Off Piste – Alps	Intro	2	1	1
Improver Off Piste - Alps	Intermediate	3	1	1
Advanced Off Piste – Alps	Intermediate/Advanced	4	2	1
Introduction to Ski Touring – Silvretta	Intro	2	1	1
Silvretta Ski Tour	Intro/Intermediate	2	2	2
Silvretta Summits	Advanced	4	4	3
Gross Venediger Ski Traverse	Advanced	4	4	3
Introduction to Ski Touring –Kaprun	Intro	2	1	1
Ortler Ski Tour	Intermediate/Advanced	3	3	2
Stubai Ski Tour	Intermediate	3	3	2
Haute Maurienne Ski Tour	Intermediate	3	3	2
Vanoise Ski Tour	Intermediate	3	3	2
Otztal Alps Traverse	Intermediate	3	3	2
Albula Alps Traverse	Intermediate/Advanced	3	3	3
Haute Route	Advanced	3	4	3
Iceland	Intermediate/Advanced	3	3	1



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