



Draft National Climbing Coach Accreditation Framework

For Public Consultation

National Coaching Committee of Sport Climbing Australia
2019





Introduction

In late 2017 the Sport Climbing Australia (SCA) commissioned a National Coaching Committee (NCC) with the aim to: “develop strong communication and knowledge sharing between coaches¹ in Australia.” Furthermore, “the committee will work towards the improvement of the standard of coaches around Australia available to our athletes”. In March of 2018 a vision, mission and a set of strategic objectives was adopted by the NCC.

Vision: “The Sport Climbing Australia Coaching Committee will **build a coaching community** focused on climbing on artificial structures which is recognised both nationally and internationally for **delivering best practice programming** and **nurturing new coaching talent.**”

Mission: “Driving performance of Australian climbers through **educating** new and experienced coaches, **recognising** coaching through certification pathways and **advocating** for the advancement of coaches in the climbing community.”

The three initial strategic objectives of the NCC are:

- Developing a national climbing coach accreditation framework which focuses on assessing a coach's ability
- Creating a coaches education pathway which aligns with the certification framework
- Building the capacity of the SCA to execute and manage the accreditation and education processes once developed.

The purpose of this document is to outline the the underpinning framework which will serve as a basis for both assessment activities which will be undertaken to recognise coaches experience and skills as well as to develop the curriculum to educate emerging coaches and define the career pathway and opportunities open to climbing coaches in Australia. While the precise content of assessment and training activities must adapt to changes in our sport, the framework should serve as a relatively static guide as to how we as a coaching community define the key attributes of both competence and excellence in climbing coaching. Therefore, readers should understand that the use of some general terms has been done purposely in order to allow assessment and training content the ability to adapt to future changes in our sport and keep our coach assessment and training relevant now and into the future.

This documents is influenced by the *International Sport Coach Framework* published by the International Council for Coaching Excellence.²

¹ Coaches in the context of this document refers always to climbing coaches.

² International Council for Coaching Excellence, Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, Leeds Beckett University. (2013) *International Sport Coach Framework* Version 1.2. Published by Human Kinetics, Champaign, Illinois, United States. Retrieved from: <https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/>

Principles

Coaches play a crucial role in the development and promotion of sport. With rapid increase in interest, exposure and participation in climbing, coaches will be responsible for the development of safe, fun and high quality climbing programming to children and adults across the ability spectrum.

Four principles guide the development of this coach accreditation framework. These principles underpin many of the decisions that are expressed in this document and changes to the context in which these principles were formed will require the coaching accreditation framework to be revisited with possible modifications.

An Individual Centered Orientation

Coaches have a responsibility to improve and expand their capabilities on an ongoing basis to fully meet the needs of the athletes/climbers they serve. This responsibility to athletes/climbers includes communicating the level of their skill and expertise as coaches through their accreditation level so that the limitations of a coach are also recognised.

Recognition of the coaches development network

A high-quality coach is the result of a diverse network of organisations and individuals that contribute to a coaches formal and informal education, inspiration, motivation and recognition.

Building and implementing a practical and equitable framework

Given the uneven development of sport climbing across Australia, coaches may have very different access to organisational support, facilities and training equipment. This framework will strive to mitigate diverse access factors but must also recognise skills and experience that may only be obtained in some environments.

Ensuring the framework is valued by the coaching community and stakeholders

For this framework to be of any use, the coaching community must value the accreditation as an expression of their skill and expertise and the assessment process must be fair while strictly enforcing the requirements and expectation of accreditation candidates.

The Scope of the Framework

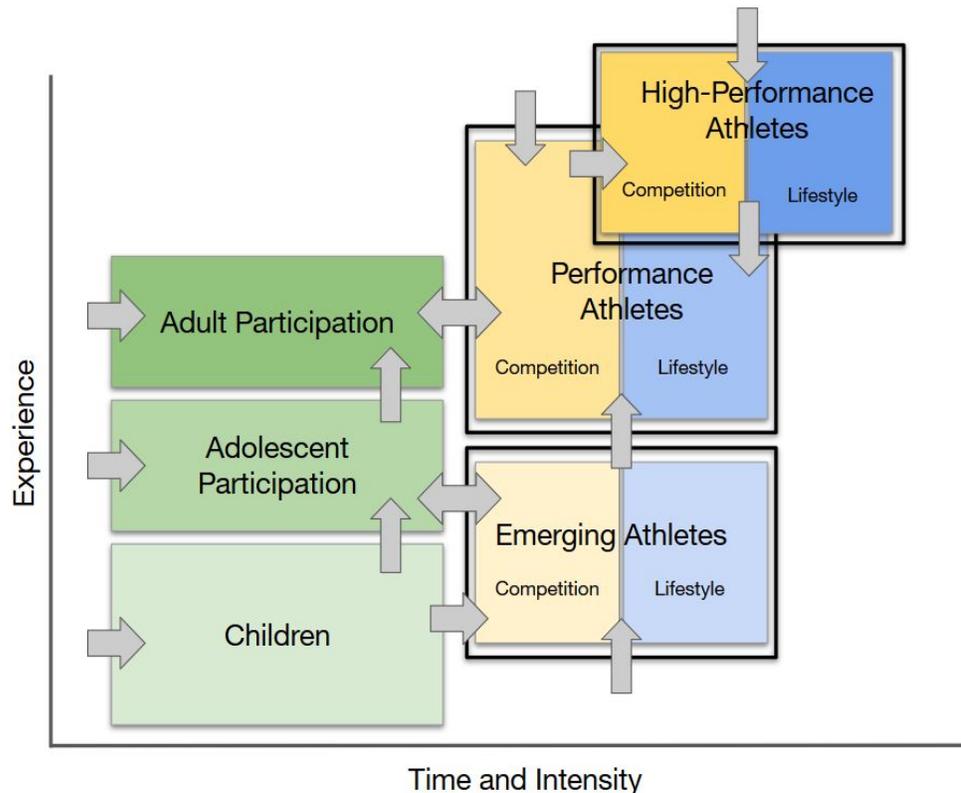
Coaching is a process of guided improvement and development at identifiable stages within climbing. The National Climbing Coach Accreditation (NCCA) Framework is designed to recognise and develop coaching skills of those operating on artificial climbing structures for individual clients or groups with a variety of climbing goals. This includes coaching for performance at climbing competitions as well as coaching clients to achieve personal non competitive climbing objectives.

The objective of the design of the framework is intended to reflect the real-world delivery of coaching services that is common across coaching for different purposes while also then recognising areas of specialisation.

Who are we coaching?

Research into coaching methodology and pedagogy suggests that there are two types of engagement in sport: participation and performance. The needs and motives of people taking part in climbing will change across the participation and performance map and coaches' philosophy, knowledge and capabilities need to reflect this in order to maximise the chances of athletes and participants having positive development experiences in climbing. In climbing, an athlete/climber may express performance goals while not engaging in competition with substantial implications on the coaching approach and programming, therefore the the performance domains can be further segmented into competition and lifestyle segments as depicted in Figure 1. Note that the segmented competition athlete or lifestyle performance climber may sit anywhere within their engagement domain along the vertical and horizontal axis.

Figure 1:
 Overall Sport
 Participation and
 Performance Map



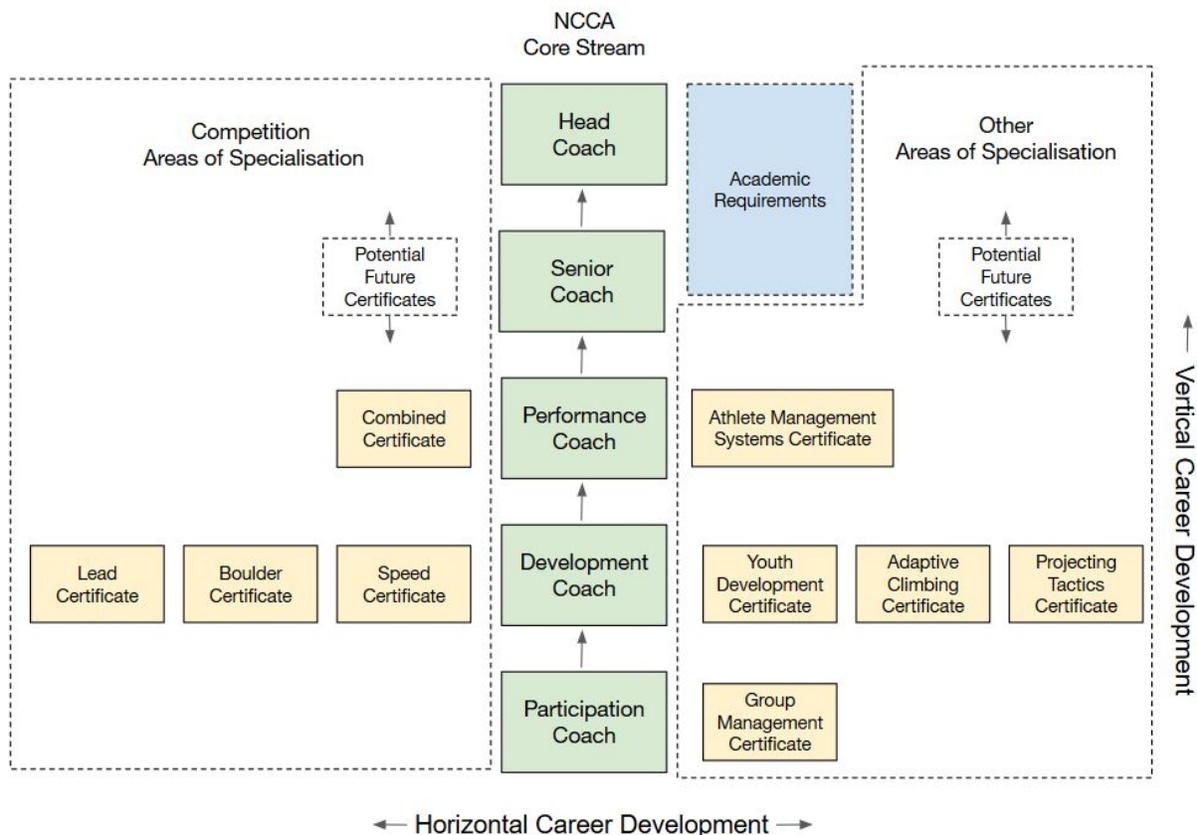
National Climbing Coach Accreditation Framework

The overall structure of the NCCA Framework is presented in Figure 2. The framework is designed to offer both horizontal and vertical career development pathways where core climbing coaching skills and knowledge are developed and assessed through 5 levels starting at Participation Coach to Head Coach while also allowing for mastery and specialisation of knowledge relevant for a NCCA candidate’s current coaching activities as well as their future career aspirations. New areas of specialisation may be added at any level of the NCCA Framework as our sport evolves without affecting the overall framework.

The NCCA framework is also designed to be relevant to those coaching climbing in differing contexts for the various groups and their engagement type within the sport. Whereas many coaches employed by climbing facilities may focus on delivering programming to groups with an emphasis on competitions there is also a growing group of independent coaches working with individuals with performance goals for their outdoor climbing where the understanding of competition climbing will not be relevant.

Outside of the NCCA levels, additional certifications may be required such as First Aid training, Working with Children Checks, or training through the Sport Australia and the Australian Anti-Doping Agency. These requirements will be outlined in detail in future candidate assessment documentation.

Figure 2: National Climbing Coach Accreditation (NCCA) Structure and Pathway



The five accreditation levels are:

Participation Coach - This first level is designed to be an accessible point of entry with a very low barrier of entry so that anyone who may play a formal or informal role of coaching will consider obtaining this level of accreditation to engage with the coaching community and understand the resources available to them.

Development Coach - A considerable leap in knowledge and experience is expected between the participation and Development Coach where it is expected a Development Coach (second level) will be in formal coaching positions and be considering long term career opportunities in climbing coaching. Additionally, at this level a number of certificates are available for career development in specialised areas.

Performance Coach - A coach operating at the the third level of the NCCA will be expected to have considerable experience in coaching roles and begin to exhibit leadership skills within the organisations they operate in and within the national coaching community. A Performance Coach should have completed at least one specialisation module.

Senior Coach - A Senior Coach has made a commitment to pursuing a career in coaching full-time and has considerable prior experience leading and designing coaching programming (fourth level) . A Senior Coach will have demonstrated their knowledge through academic achievement and also commit to playing a leadership role among coaching peers. Senior Coaches with aspirations to coach competitive climbing will have experience coaching at an international level.

Head Coach - The Head Coach, level five, represents achieving the highest level of expertise in the climbing coaching field with significant contributions to the coaching community at the national and international level. Further academic requirements will demonstrate deeper and more specialised knowledge with likely contributions to novel coaching knowledge in the climbing coaching field. A Head Coach will be expected to play a leadership role within the organisations the Head Coach works with and among fellow coaching peers.



Knowledge & Competence Area Descriptions

The NCCA strives to be relevant for all climbing coaches regardless of the specific clientele of a coach or the objectives of the athletes/climbers that they work with. Therefore 8 core knowledge and competence areas have been identified which describe the expectations of climbing coaches. For each of these areas the specific level of knowledge for a given level of the NCCA will be described in the following sections whereas these descriptions are to be used to understand what is covered within a given knowledge area and will drive assessment tasks and an aligned training curriculum. Specialisation modules and external certifications will be used to supplement climbing coaches knowledge areas and recognise those coaches who are cultivating specific skills as well as to signal to potential employers additional skills.



8 Knowledge & Competence Areas:

Safety

Summary: Evaluate risk and prioritise safety.

Description: Given the inherent risk associated with climbing, coaches, as their highest priority, must be capable of understanding risky behaviour and mitigating inherent risk. For example, recognising safe belaying technique, recognising safe coach to athlete ratios, ensuring athletes/climbers are safe lead climbers before pushing physical limits or understanding and removing matting hazards while bouldering.

Climbing Skills

Summary: Knowledge specific to climbing which encompasses: movement literacy, complementary physical training, psychological preparation and skill, and tactical approaches to climbing.

Description: Climbing coaches should have knowledge and experience in four domains within climbing skills: movement literacy, complementary physical training, psychological training and climbing tactics. Movement literacy includes defining and demonstrating foundational to advanced climbing techniques as well as distinguish theoretical approaches to developing motor skills. Complementary physical training encompasses employing basic conditioning practices to enhance climbing performance as well as understanding where more specialised knowledge is required from a strength and conditioning professional. Psychological training incorporates the cultivation and facilitation of the optimal climbing mindset required to execute at the performance limit for a given athlete. Developing climbing tactics includes developing route reading skills and on route decision making skills.

Athlete / Climber Well-Being

Summary: Understanding the athlete/climber holistically to deliver programming which considers injury prevention, psychological state and nutritional behaviours.

Description: Beyond mitigating safety risks, coaches should consider the implications of programming on the athlete/climber holistically. This means that coaches should strive to define all the factors which influence performance and facilitate improvement in these factors. A coach should promote adopting an athlete mindset and performance lifestyle as well as recognise when the coach has reached the limits of

their knowledge and then access specialist knowledge and skills to support the athlete and work with other professionals to benefit the athlete.

Athlete / Climber Management

Summary: Effectively conduct training sessions appropriately for the delivery context.

Description: Coaches at all levels must be capable of effectively managing small and large groups through a training session, making adjustments to the session as required. Delivering engaging sessions that communicate climbing skill knowledge will be required to effectively conduct training sessions. When conducting a training session with another coach, a coach should also know how to be effective in a supporting role during a training session. Higher level coaches will also be capable of playing leadership roles and conducting/leading workshops for other coaches.

Planning and Programming

Summary: Set a vision and strategy for the development of athletes/climbers which align with overall organisational programming. Plan and coordinate training sessions which align to program objectives.

Description: Training sessions must be planned in advance and fit within a program objective along with ensuring that required facility access and equipment is available for a training session and that the size of the group for each session is considered when preparing for each session. Advanced planning will require coaches to be capable of building individual athlete/climber performance plans with frequent evaluations and to consider the national and international competition calendar as well as Olympic cycles. Coaches should be capable of contributing to understanding the climber base of the organisation or club they are coaching and to formulate ideas about potential gaps in programming. For example, for a given facility is the configuration of youth programming best done by age or ability? As coaches gain experience they should be able to evaluate a facilities programming and, if necessary, re-design it from scratch.



Environment

Summary: Understand the training environment and make modifications to training plans accordingly.

Description: Access to a variety of climbing 'terrain' remains a significant challenge for many climbing coaches in Australia. Being able to evaluate the physical training environment and adapting training plans to a given facility is an important skill. Factors that may be considered when understanding a training environment may for example be: the climbing surface angles, height and appropriateness for leading, access to the type and quality of climbing holds and the diversity in movement and quality of route setting that the athletes have access to.

Relationships

Summary: Building and managing relationships with demonstrated qualities of an educator and leader.

Description: Optimal athlete/climber development occurs with input from many professionals, organisations and individuals for example family members. An effective coach must demonstrate an ability to interpret the climbing community network around an athlete/climber that is influencing their performance and be able to orchestrate and positively impact that network. For example, building relationships with facility routesetters to ensure access to appropriate routes for training. Higher level coaches will also require skills in advocating for their athletes within various sporting organisations and sport administration bureaucracies to leverage support for athletes this includes mapping the stakeholder hierarchies to understand the impact on athletes.



Professional Development

Summary: Self-reflection in coaching performance and ongoing engagement in professional development.

Description: The coaching body of literature and knowledge is constantly growing and improving. Coaches at all levels are expected to strive for continuous improvement and new coaching skill acquisition. Formal, informal, and in-person, as well as online education will be recognised and encouraged in the coaching community. Coaches will be expected to also share coaching experience through playing mentoring roles to other coaches, participating and leading formal training workshops and contributing to NSO and State coaching bodies.

When a candidate is successful during the assessment process there will be requirements to maintain their level of recognition. This may include:

- A special class of SCA membership
- Annual requirements to provide the SCA evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Evidence of maintaining external certificates such as Working With Children Checks
- Provide information about active coaching activity to contribute to industry intelligence

CPD requirements may start off being flexible with requirements and then tighten up as SCA builds administrative capacity and has the capacity to regularly run workshops and conferences.

The National Coaching Committee recognises the need for an educational pathway to facilitate new and less experienced coaches to increase their skill and knowledge. Building an educational pathway will be a high priority once the NCCA Framework has been adopted and implementation has begun.



Level 1: Participation Coach

Area		Description of required competence for Level 1 Coach
Safety		Models safe climbing behaviours at all times
		Experienced with top rope systems commonly used in climbing facilities and can competently use all required equipment for top roping
		Understand risks and potential hazards in bouldering areas and is able to demonstrate and assess basic falling technique
		Perform appropriate acute incident response within a climbing session
Athlete wellbeing		Knowledge of age and experience related training techniques
		Applies participant safeguarding and knowledge of duty of care responsibilities
		Facilitates climber enjoyment
Participant / athlete management		Able to lead a training session utilising different teaching methods
		Communicates effectively across a range of demographics
		Awareness of interpersonal dynamics
Climbing skills	Movement Literacy	Foundational understanding of technique
	Physical	Foundational understanding of warming up and cooling down appropriately for climbing
	Tactical	Understanding of grading system and foundational understanding of route reading
	Psychological	Incorporates the concept of a growth mindset in coaching approach
Planning and programming		Able to prepare for sessions, implement and follow lesson plans
Environment		Foundational understanding of how a physical environment influences a training session
		Foundational understanding of route appropriateness for a group
Professional Development		Able to engage in session review and reflection processes
		Demonstrates a desire to learn new skills and knowledge
Relationships		Can identify key influencers in an athletes development
Areas of Specialisation		Upon obtaining Level 1 accreditation, access will be granted to specialisation modules which will include a group management/dynamics module.

Level 2: Development Coach

Area		Description of required competence for Level 2 Coach
Safety		Outline the facility procedure for acute injury response
		Experience with lead climbing indoors and can competently use all required equipment for lead climbing
		Demonstrate basic indoor rescue skills
Athlete wellbeing		Knowledge of common injuries and injury prevention
		Understanding of youth developmental stages
Participant / athlete management		Able to manage Level 1 coaches and work with other coaches within a training session
Climbing skills	Movement Literacy	Developing understanding of technique
	Physical	Foundational understanding of conditioning for climbing and knowledge of appropriate warming up for planned activities
	Tactical	Developing understanding of route reading including pacing, resting and clipping strategies.
	Psychological	Foundational understanding of visualisation
		Aim to facilitate a growth mind approach to climbing within participants
Planning and programming		Able to develop appropriate class plans
		Able to contribute ideas and concepts to improve overall programming
Environment		Can modify plans to effectively address situational factors
		Able to identify routes for specific purposes
Professional Development		Reflects regularly on the strengths and weaknesses of the coaching practice and actively looks for opportunities to fill knowledge and skill gaps
		Annual CPD requirements
		Engages with the SCA and their SSA coaching community
Relationships		Engages with an athletes network
		Demonstrates emerging leadership qualities within the local community
Areas of Specialisation		Upon obtaining Level 2 accreditation, access will be granted to specialisation modules which will include discipline specific competition certifications as well as modules focused on the indoor training for outdoor redpoint projects.

Level 3: Performance Coach

Area		Description of required competence for Level 3 Coach
Safety		Mastery of advanced falling techniques for both lead climbing and boulder
Athlete wellbeing		Basic knowledge of psychology, nutritional and lifestyle behaviours as performance factors and their impacts on an athletes performance
		Understanding of a coaches limitations and when to refer to other professional experts
		Foundational understanding of doping and ASADA procedures
Participant / athlete management		Understanding of various learning styles and the adaptation of teaching styles to the participants learning style
		Ability to work within a team environment to deliver sessions for athlete/climbers or other coaches
Climbing skills	Movement Literacy	Advanced understanding of techniques and pattern recognition
	Physical	Intermediate understanding of sports specific conditioning, knowledge of age appropriate training and individualisation of warming up
	Tactical	Advanced understanding of route reading, campaign management, plan execution and decision making
	Psychological	Advanced understanding of visualisation, goal setting and development of a psychological performance process
Planning and programming		Able to develop, deploy and adjust an athlete / client program on various time cycles according to how the athlete/client is responding to training
Environment		Able to adapt and address complex situational issues
		Able to demonstrate a knowledge of route setting
		Able to rapidly assess environment and effectively manage resources
Professional Development		Ability to reflect on outcome implementation and personal coaching philosophy
		Annual CPD requirements
Relationships		Plays leadership role in an athletes development network
Areas of Specialisation		Upon obtaining Level 3 accreditation, access will be granted to specialisation modules which will include a combined competition format module and an athlete management module focused on remote communication and use of recording systems.

Level 4: Senior Coach

Area		Description of required competence for Level 4 Coach
Safety		As per Levels 1-3
Athlete wellbeing		High level understanding of ASADA procedures and athlete support during doping control
		High level of understanding in managing performance lifestyle
Participant / athlete management		Advanced team training specific module area of specialisation
Climbing skills	Movement Literacy	Up to date with best practise and mastery of level 3 skills
	Physical	Up to date with best practise and mastery of level 3 skills
	Tactical	Up to date with best practise and mastery of level 3 skills
	Psychological	Up to date with best practise and mastery of level 3 skills
Planning and programming		Understanding of team level training cycles and programming
		Understanding of complex programming for an organisation, including novel programming solutions on a large scale
		Able to develop and deploy a long term performance strategy for individuals and organisations
		Able to coordinate and manage long term plan support services
Environment		Actively advocates organisations for training environment improvement
		Participates in design and improvement of training environments at a club or state level
Professional Development		Holds an Undergraduate Degree in a relevant field or is undertaking a Postgraduate Degree
		Demonstrates a higher level of expertise in the sport
		Contributes to the climbing coaching community nationally
Relationships		Demonstrates advocacy and leadership within the greater climbing community at an organisational level
Areas of Specialisation		Upon obtaining Level 4 accreditation, access will be granted to specialisation modules, for example, an advanced team management module. May also be involved in the creation of new areas of specialisation.

Level 5: Head Coach

Area	Description of required competence for Level 5 Coach
Safety	Demonstrates awareness of effects of legislation and legislative changes for the coaching and athlete community
	Involved in safety education development and deployment nationally
Athlete wellbeing	Demonstrates a knowledge of how to integrate specific support services into various programs
	Participates in the development and deployment of education processes for coaches in relation to athlete wellbeing
Participant / athlete management	Leads in coaching team management at an organisational level
	Able to demonstrate effective team management skills
Climbing skills	Delivers regular and ongoing input into the greater climbing community
	Advance understanding of sport specific knowledge interplay and planning impacts
Planning and programming	Demonstrates a systematic approach to athlete evaluation and performance management
	Demonstrates a complex multi-domain approach to understanding factors that influence athlete performance
	Ability to develop and deploy solutions to complex planning problems
	Demonstrates a developed understanding of strategic direction processes
	Able to demonstrate an understanding of funding and budget management
	Demonstrates a systematic approach to athlete evaluation and performance management
Environment	Demonstrates an understanding of the national training environment, its development strategies and limitations
Professional Development	Demonstrates an established area of coaching specialisation
	Posses a minimum of Masters Degree in a relevant field
	Demonstrates a positive contribution to the climbing coaching community internationally
Relationships	Demonstrates advocacy and leadership within the greater climbing community at a National level
Areas of Specialisation	Maybe involved in the creation of new areas of specialisation

National Climbing Coach Accreditation Summary

Knowledge & Competence Area	Participation Coach	Development Coach	Performance Coach	Senior Coach	Head Coach
Safety	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced
Athlete / Climber Wellbeing	Initial	Developing	Developing	Advanced	Advanced
Climbing Skills	Initial	Developing	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced
Athlete / Climber Management	Initial	Initial	Developing	Advanced	Advanced
Planning & Programming	Initial	Initial	Developing	Developing	Advanced
Environment	Initial	Initial	Developing	Advanced	Advanced
Relationships	Initial	Initial	Developing	Advanced	Advanced
Professional Development	Initial	Developing	Developing	Advanced	Advanced



Assessment

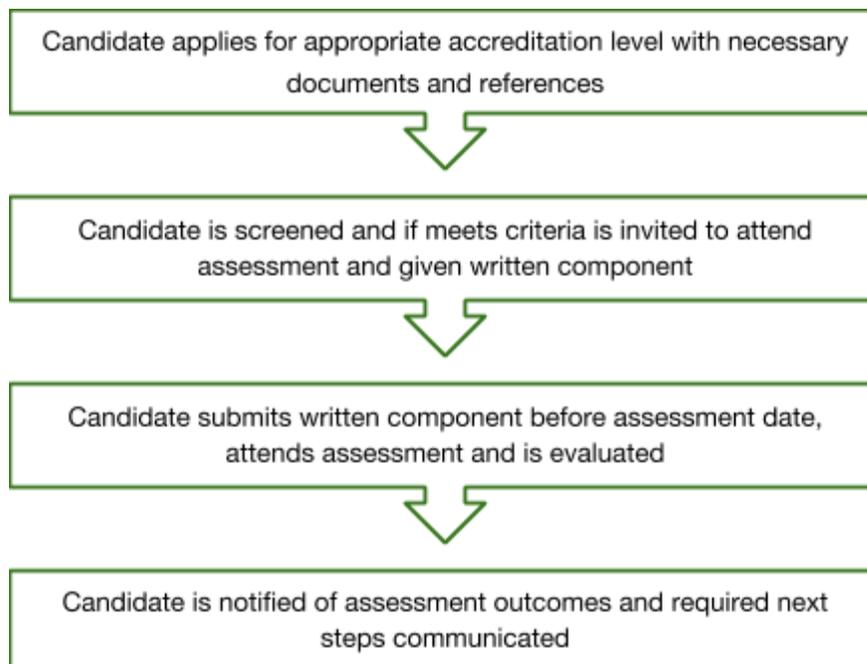
The assessment process will be detailed in a candidate handbook which will be developed after the framework is adopted/accepted. However a general outline of the process will follow as outlined in Figure 3. This will involve an application process followed by screening of candidates, before inviting candidates to undertake an assessment process. Given that there are eight competence and knowledge areas to assess, there will be a written component to the assessment process to be completed prior. All assessment activities and tasks will focus on the level of competence required in each knowledge area.

Assessment activities may include but are not limited to:

- Submitting a written example of a training plan
- Delivering a short presentation to evaluators on a given climbing skill/topic
- Demonstration of various climbing skills and abilities
- Written examinations, targeted appropriately for each coach accreditation level

An appeal process will also be developed and communicated in the candidates handbook in order to address instances where a candidate feels the outcome of the assessment did not accurately reflect their skill and knowledge.

Figure 3: General Outline of Potential Assessment Process



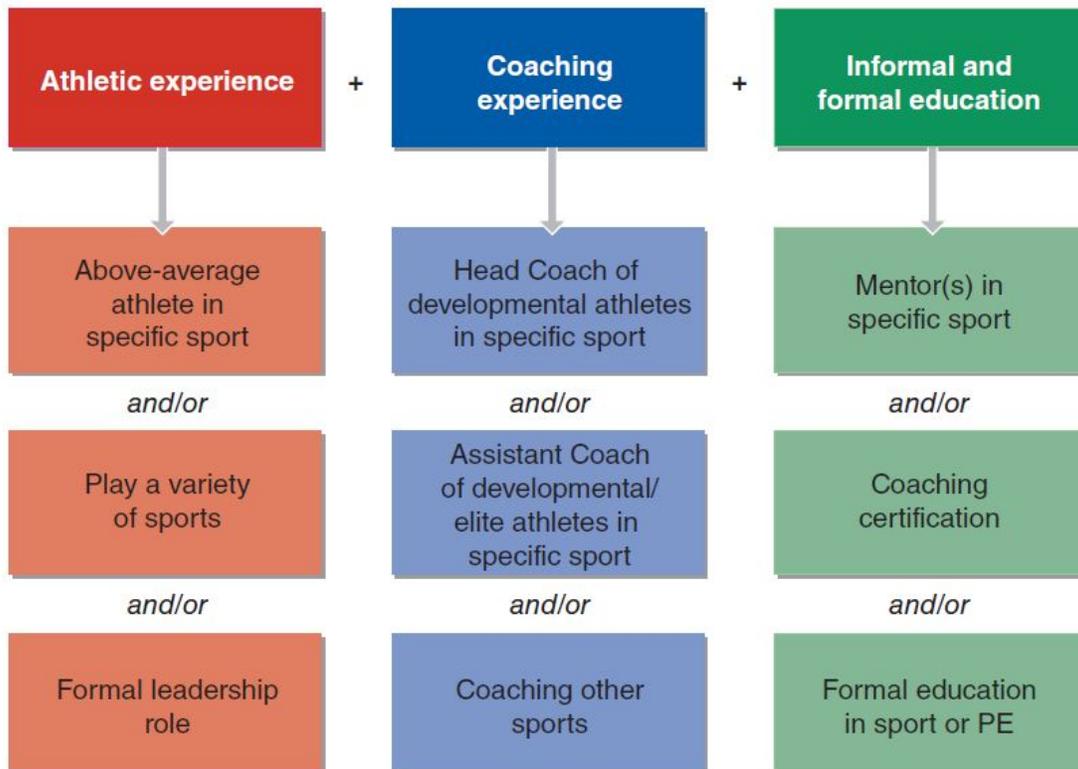
Training Curriculum

The NCCA Framework outlined in this document will also inform the development of a detailed training curriculum for the SCA to offer courses to prepare candidates for the assessment process at any given level.

These courses may require prerequisite knowledge and skills at some levels and be comprised of a mix of online and in person activities. The training curriculum will also leverage third party assets and courses such as the Australian Anti-Doping Agency online courses and Sport Australia’s online community coaching course.

Training and the development of new climbing coaching talent in Australia will consider the various experiences that contribute to a coaches development as outlined in Figure 4. The National Coaching Committee of the SCA will strive to ensure a pipeline of coaching talent is nurtured and encouraged and aim for the diversity of the climbing community to be reflected within the coaching community.

Figure 4: Examples of experiences that contribute to coach development



Implementation Considerations

There are a number of implementation considerations that must be addressed once the framework has been adopted. Most of these considerations are related to the commencement of a new accreditation framework and require input from stakeholders and the coaching community to gain acceptance.

Issue	Risk	Potential Solution
Who is qualified to be initial evaluators?	That the outcome of the first assessments are not perceived as fair and valid by the coaching community and stakeholders	Require the first 2 or 3 assessments be led by a respected climbing coach from overseas that is seen as independent and impartial
What will the process be to become a qualified evaluator?	Same risk as above but moving further into the future	That the overseas evaluator for the first assessments also certifies the first group of evaluators in a transparent process
At what level can currently active and experienced coaches apply for direct accreditation?	That currently active coaches do not feel their coaching expertise being recognised	The NCC have a special application process to apply to be assessed (at any level) open for a fixed period of time once the CCAF is implemented

