Ecole Nationale de Ski et d’Alpinisme
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French National Diploma for Ski Instructors

ENTRY TEST
The entry test for ski instructors is a slalom course which requires a high standard of skiing (for example Chamois d’Or).
Candidates can take the test a maximum of two times per season.

TRAINING SCHEME
Tests are organized by the regional government departments responsible for mountain sports, in collaboration with ENSA.
The technical test and the initial induction course take place in the Alps, the Vosges, the Pyrenees and the Jura, while the Eurotest takes place in the Alps and the Pyrenees.
Instructional courses must be taken in approved teaching centers. The training modules of the 1st and 2nd cycles are organized exclusively by ENSA, except for the competition modules which are delegated to the Fédération Française de Ski (FFS).

SYLLABUS
The syllabus for the National Diploma for Ski Instructors includes a module which is common to all mountain sports professions (FGCMEEESM).
The rest of the training is specifically geared towards ski instruction, in particular the acquisition of technical skills and the development of teaching methods for all categories of snow sport.
Further training covers group management in an off-piste environment (outside glaciated zones), avalanche awareness and other backcountry skills.
Completing the syllabus takes a minimum of three to four years from the start of the induction course.
Training courses alternate with periods of paid work experience in accredited ski schools or other approved centers.

DURATION
Tuition fees total around 5,000€. However, a large part of this can be offset through earnings from work experience. Depending on their professional situation, trainees may also be eligible for vocational training grants.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
To register for the entrance test, candidates should contact the Direction Régionale de la Jeunesse, des Sports et de la Cohésion Sociale in their place of residence.

Ski instructors, like all outdoor sports professionals, need to be highly skilled in their discipline, but must also be enthusiastic teachers.

Above all they should be passionate about the mountain environment.

The French National Diploma for Ski Instructors allows holders to professionally instruct alpine skiing and other associated activities (notably snowboarding) at all levels.

They are qualified to work in secure on-piste ski areas, and also on off-piste and backcountry itineraries, with the exception of unmarked, glaciated areas and other itineraries which require mountaineering skills.

The qualification allows the holder to work freelance (for example with a ski school), or as an employee of a large organization such as the UCPA.

Ski instructors are in contact with the public at all times and must have good interpersonal skills.

As with many outdoor professions, ski instructing is a seasonal activity (3 to 5 months per year) and is very much dependent upon the vagaries of snowfall and changing trends within the leisure market.

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ENTRANCE TEST

Objective: to determine whether the candidate has the necessary technical skills to participate in the training course.

Prerequisites:
- Candidates must be at least seventeen years old by 31 December of the calendar year in which they take the test.

INDUCTION COURSE (2 weeks)

Under the responsibility of ENSA

Objectives:
- to study theoretical elements and teaching methods of alpine skiing for levels 2, 3 and 4;
- to develop the necessary technical ability for level 4 instruction;
- to master the expert instructor turn.

EUROTEST OR FIS EQUIVALENCE

Objective: to demonstrate skiing ability.

Prerequisites:
- Trainees must have completed the first cycle at least one winter season prior to the start of the course.
- Trainees must have successfully completed a minimum of 6 ski touring and off-piste excursions.

1ST CYCLE (4 weeks)

Under the responsibility of ENSA

Objectives:
- to learn about the workings of the French Skiing Federation and the regulations governing competitive alpine skiing (course layout, competition rules).

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ALPINE SKI INSTRUCTION IN A WINTER MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT

Prerequisites:
- Trainees must have completed a minimum of 25 days initial work experience.
- Trainees must have passed the Eurotest within the previous 5 years.

2ND CYCLE (5 weeks)

Under the responsibility of ENSA

Objectives:
- to gain the theoretical knowledge and technical skills required for ski instructing from beginner level to level 2; learn the basics of associated activities such as snowboarding; develop personal skills (expert instructor turns/language skills); learn basic safety principles.

3RD CYCLE (maximum 4 years + 2 years), delivered by the Ecole Nationale des Sports de Montagne (ENSA site)

Objectives:
- to develop technical and instructional proficiency for all levels; to acquire the ability to progress safely in the associated disciplines (including snowboarding); to develop teaching skills for children and people with disabilities.

ADVANCED RISK MANAGEMENT ON-PISTE, OFF-PISTE, AND IN A BACKCOUNTRY ENVIRONMENT IN WINTER; INCLUDES THE EUROPEAN MOUNTAIN SECURITY TEST

Prerequisites:
- Trainees must have completed the first cycle at least one winter season prior to the start of the course.
- Trainees must have successfully completed a minimum of 6 ski touring and off-piste excursions.

ADVANCED TECHNICAL AND TEACHING SKILLS

Prerequisites:
- Trainees must have completed a minimum of 25 days further work experience.
- Trainees must have passed the common training module (FGCMEEESM) or an equivalent qualification.

ADVANCED SKILLS FOR THE SAFE INSTRUCTION OF ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES INCLUDING SNOWBOARDING

Prerequisites:
- Trainees must have completed a minimum of 25 days initial work experience.
- Trainees must have successfully completed a minimum of 6 ski touring and off-piste excursions.

OBJECTIVES:
- To adapt technical and teaching skills to off-piste skiing at all levels, and develop group leadership skills.

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