

Training Structure

The training program for mountain guides has a theoretical element (FGCMEEESM) – common to all mountain sports qualifications – and specific modules which focus on guiding skills. A trainee must have passed the theoretical module before being accepted onto the Aspirant Guide Ski Course (see internal pages). Trainees are advised to complete this theoretical course as soon as possible after passing the entrance exam.

Length of Training

The training program for mountain guides takes at least three years. Once they have passed the entrance exam, trainees have a maximum of seven years to complete all the courses. Formal training is carried out at the national training center (ENSA), and trainees must also spend a number of days accompanying a fully qualified guide who acts as an independent tutor.

Exemption from some modules is available for trainees who hold the following qualifications:

- **National rock climbing instructor award** (BEES/DE escalade): holders are exempted from the instruction module of the Aspirant Guide Fundamentals Course (Aspirant Guide 1).
- **National ski instructor award** (BEES/DE ski): holders are exempted from the instructional module of the Aspirant Guide Ski Course (Aspirant Guide 2).
- Holders of an instructor award obtained before 31 December 2013 are exempted from the common theoretical element.

Cost of Training

The entire course – from the entrance exam to the full guide qualification – costs approximately €11,000. However, this can be partly self-funded, as trainees can start working professionally as soon as they have passed the initial Aspirant Guide Fundamentals course. Trainees may also benefit from different types of funding available for vocational training.

Additional Information

For further information on registration requirements and conditions, training programs, examinations, potential sources of financial aid, and examination dates, please consult the ENSA website: (<http://www.ensa-chamonix.net>).

Regulations Relating to the National Mountain Guides' Diploma

These are detailed in the 16 June decree relating to specific training for the National Mountain Guide Diploma (JORF - 8 July 2014).



French National Diploma for Mountain Guides



Mountain guiding is physically and mentally demanding, and requires a high level of technical skill.

Before attempting the entrance exam for the mountain guide training scheme, a candidate must have extensive experience of the mountain environment and a high technical level in all disciplines involved i.e. alpinism (snow, ice, rock, and mixed terrain), ski-mountaineering, off-piste skiing, ice-fall climbing etc.

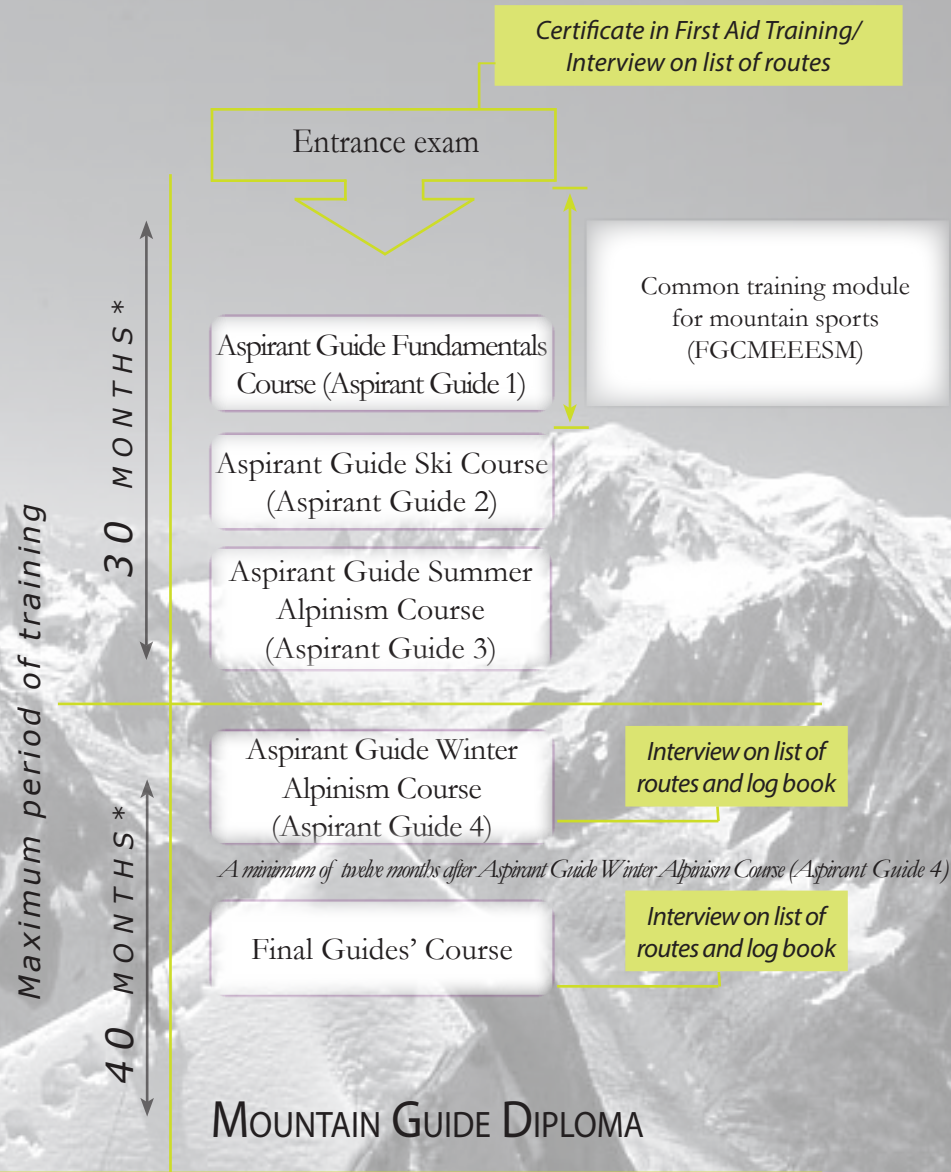
The mountain guide diploma certifies that the holder can work professionally in the following areas:

- Leading and accompanying clients on mountain excursions and/or ascents on rock, snow, ice and mixed terrain, as well as on ski mountaineering and off-piste skiing itineraries.
- Teaching the skills for the above activities.
- Coaching competitors in the above disciplines.

A continued professional development course must be attended every 6 years.

It is possible for mountain guides to work full-time, as their qualification covers a wide range of activities, but for many it remains a seasonal job.

Training Syllabus



*A year's extension may be granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical issues, studies, maternity).

Entrance Examination

Requirements:

- Candidates must be at least 18 years old on the 1 January of the year in which they sit the entrance exam.
- They must present a list of 39 routes which they have completed (see ENSA website for details)
- They must hold a current certificate in First Aid training (AFPS)

Duration: 10 days. Candidates must pass all tests.

Content:

1. An interview during which the candidate presents their list of routes
2. A rock-climbing test in rock shoes
3. A snow and ice test
4. A mixed-terrain test in mountaineering boots
5. An off-piste ski test
6. A navigation test (using only map, compass and altimeter)
7. A 5-day period of evaluation in the mountains on a diverse range of routes

Common Training Module for Mountain Sports (FGCMEEESM)

This must be successfully completed before the Aspirant Guide Ski Course (Aspirant Guide 2).

Aspirant Guide Fundamentals Course (Aspirant Guide 1)

A 4-week training course. Trainees are assessed continually and by final exams.

Content:

- Rock climbing instruction
- Navigation
- Essential guiding skills
- Multi-pitch/trad climbing

Aspirant Guide Ski Course (Aspirant Guide 2)

A 4-week training and assessment course. Trainees are assessed continually and by final exams.

Content:

- Essential winter guiding skills
- Off-piste skiing and ski mountaineering, part I
- Off-piste skiing and ski mountaineering, part II

Aspirant Guide Summer Alpinism Course (Aspirant Guide 3)

A 4-week training course. Trainees are assessed continually and by final exams.

Aspirant Guide Winter Alpinism Course (Aspirant Guide 4)

A 1-week training course. Trainees are assessed continually and by final exams.

Entry requirements: Trainees must be interviewed on their log-books (Part 1) and on a list of routes they have completed which have furthered personal development.

Final Guides' Course

This is a four-week training and assessment course.

Entry requirements: Trainees must be interviewed on their log-books (Part 2) and a list of routes they have completed, some for personal development and some as a professional guide.

Content:

- Hut to hut ski touring
- Alpine mountaineering