



**PLAS Y BRENIN**  
NATIONAL OUTDOOR CENTRE

# The International Mountain Leader Award Timed Navigation Test FAQs

## Background Information

It is a requirement from UIMLA that each member country must conduct a navigational assessment where fixed checkpoints, marked on a map, are visited in a set time. Unlike other Mountain Training walking awards, Physical Fitness is also in the syllabus, requiring candidates to be able to move at 4km/hr and 1 minute per 10 metres of ascent.

Please have a look at the Candidate Handbook on the Mountain Training website.

## Do I have to book the test separately?

No, the course fee for the IML Summer Training course includes the Timed Navigation Test. You will automatically be booked onto this test when you book the training course.

## When do we do the test?

Typically, we run the test on the afternoon of the first day of the IML Summer Training course. After lunch there will be a briefing session outlining what the test entails, and an opportunity to answer any questions candidates may have. We've found that it's nicer to 'get the test out of the way' at the beginning of the week.

## What should I wear, and or carry with me during the test?

You decide, appropriate footwear (e.g. fell running shoes or boots) and clothing for the mountainous environment. This should include a hill bag containing personal safety kit to enable you to look after yourself in the event of an accident. You are not required to carry a 'leader's pack' during the test.

The use of a GPS or phone to navigate is not allowed. Candidates may use a compass and altimeter.

## What does the course entail?

Each candidate will be given an individual course. Each course is on a 1:25 000 map with 6 points to navigate to over a given time of around 3 hours. The routes are approximately 5km with 550m height gain. To pass the test all points will need to be found within the specified time given on the map.

## What is the standard of navigation and fitness required?

The standard of navigation is similar to that required at ML assessment level. You will need to be able to move over mountainous (uneven and rough at times) terrain at approximately 4km/hr with 1min per 10m of height gain. If you spend a long time making a navigational plan, or make a mistake, you will have to move faster than this to arrive on time.

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## How can I prepare for the course?

Ensure you have practiced your navigation in a mountainous environment. It is not unusual for people to have skill fade since their ML assessment, as many people typically do not need to navigate in this way at work. Check you can sustain a pace of 1 minute per 10metres of height gain, e.g. by walking uphill for 250meters in 25 minutes. Practice finding changes in contours, such as small spurs, flat areas, bends in valleys etc...

The test is completed individually, and therefore practicing these skills solo may be beneficial too. As no one else will be there to confirm your location, you could record your practice on a mapping app / watch, but only check this at the end of your day on the hill to replicate the test conditions where results are given upon finishing the route. Going orienteering is another way to practice navigation. There are many permanent and downloadable courses in the UK, and clubs which run events. This British Orienteering page has links to each of these options:

[Orienteering Anytime](#)

If you would like some formal input on your navigation, you could book onto an ML refresher or look at the CPD offered through the Mountain Training Website. There are many regional MTA groups who deliver navigation training throughout the year.

## What if I don't pass the test?

If you don't pass, you will need to book a reassessment. These generally take place during a separate IML Summer Training course. There will not be a further opportunity during the week of your training course at Plas Y Brenin to resit the test.

## Any other questions?

Please pop us an email at [info@pyb.co.uk](mailto:info@pyb.co.uk)



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