



# **Professional Ski Instructors of America**

## **Cross Country Certification Standards** Level I, Level II, Level III

Updated: November 2020

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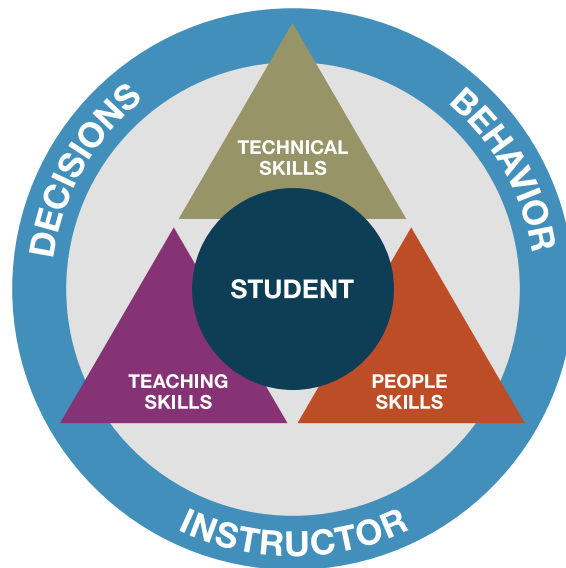
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# Introduction

## PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards

American ski instruction demands versatility. PSIA-AASI members teach guests in a wide variety of skiing environments, and in the cross country discipline the types of lessons can be similarly diverse – including recreational classic skiing and skate skiing as well as race-focused coaching for both. The objective of these *PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards* is to identify the fundamentals of great skiing, effective teaching, and connecting with students – and to define the assessment criteria within PSIA-AASI’s certification process.



To this end, the Learning Connection<sup>SM</sup> model provides the framework for a balance of crucial people skills, teaching skills, and technical skills; highlighting fundamentals that apply to a variety of technical and tactical decisions based on student ability, motivation, personality, and more.

The *PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards* align guest ability level with assessment parameters for three levels of instructor certification.

- Beginner/Novice Guests – PSIA-Certified Level I Instructor
- Beginner- to Intermediate Guests – PSIA-Certified Level II Instructor
- Beginner- to Advanced Guests – PSIA-Certified Level III Instructor

Level I certification is meant to affirm that the instructor is qualified to teach beginner/novice guests, primarily on beginner/novice terrain (typically identified as “green”). Level II certification generally means that the instructor is qualified to teach beginner and intermediate guests, in which students are primarily on intermediate (blue) and some green terrain. Level III certification generally means that the instructor is qualified to teach ALL students on a wide variety of terrain.

These *PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards* provide the assessment criteria for the people skills, teaching skills, and technical skiing skills necessary for an instructor to successfully complete a specific certification. For example, Level I instructors are assessed on their development of certain level-specific skillsets, and as they progress in their professional development they enhance and expand skillsets to teach a wider range of students – in more variable conditions and terrain. This sets the stage to seek higher levels of certification. PSIA-AASI offers many resources to aid instructors' professional development with regard to fundamentals of people, teaching, and technical skills. At a minimum, this *PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards* document complements and should be consulted in combination with the following publications:

- *Cross Country Technical Manual:*  
Explores content related to performing and evaluating the technical skills of cross country skiing.
- *Teaching Snowsports Manual:*  
Explores content related to people skills and teaching skills.
- *PSIA-AASI Performance Guides:*  
Presents the performance indicators for assessing all skill categories within the Learning Connection model – providing the detail instructors need to perform the assessment activities.



## Assessment Activities and Assessment Criteria

Evaluating a certification candidate's skills requires well-defined, measurable assessment criteria – as presented in PSIA-AASI's *Performance Guides*. When performing skiing assessment activities, the duration, intensity, rate, and timing of movements (DIRT) will vary, based on the conditions and skillsets being assessed. Assessment activities are performed in specific terrain and with the degree of accuracy outlined in the assessment criteria.

Assessing people skills and teaching skills requires an evaluation environment that simulates a ski lesson. Teaching situations and scenarios are relevant to guest skier level, with assessment based on the level of certification sought. They need to allow enough time and/or frequency for demonstration of all assessment criteria. Those that take place on snow should be on terrain that's suitable for the related skier level – beginner/novice, intermediate, or advanced. People skills may be assessed throughout the entire certification process by assessing the instructor's ability to build and maintain the trust that fosters continued learning at the required level.

Throughout the assessment process, divisions will use a variety of assessment activities – based on terrain and prevailing conditions – to evaluate instructor competency as outlined in these *PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards*. Not all assessment activities need to take place on snow.

These *PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards* describe how the fundamentals of people skills, teaching skills, and technical skills are assessed at each level of certification. Effective use of the national standards, combined with a wide range of educational resources, creates an efficient environment for consistent evaluation.

## The Language of Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The *PSIA Cross Country Certification Standards* rely upon the following Learning Outcome Framework to create a consistent language for assessment. The learning outcomes clearly state what the instructor can demonstrate upon successful completion of the certification assessment.

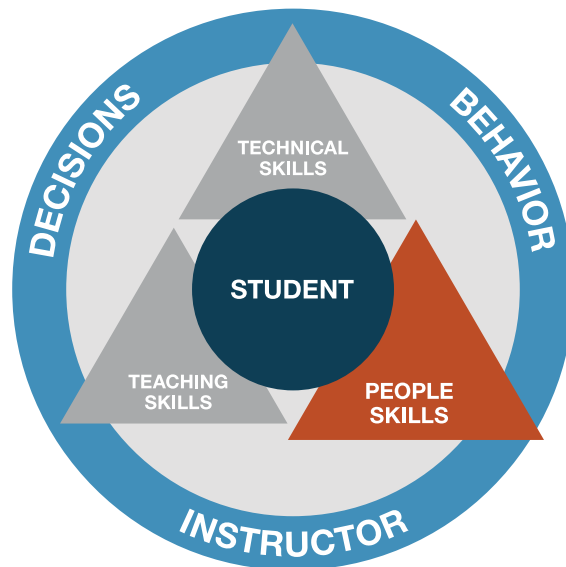
- Learning Outcomes:** Learning outcomes represent what is to be achieved upon completion of each level of certification. Learning outcomes do not vary between examiners or divisions.
- Learning Experiences:** These are the training experiences – or tasks – that lead to achievement of the learning outcome. NOTE: The learning experiences listed in this document are *recommendations* of what an **instructor** may do in order to gain the knowledge and understanding relative to the given subject area. These are *not* requirements; they are suggested approaches to aid individuals in their development as professional snowsports educators. For more details, refer to the associated *Performance Guide*.
- Assessment Activities:** Representing *how* a person is assessed, these are the activities a candidate performs to demonstrate that learning has occurred. (These have historically been described as tasks or maneuvers.) NOTE: The assessment activities listed in this document are *recommendations* of what an **examiner** may use to assess knowledge and understanding relative to the given subject area. The examiner is free to use variations and alternatives. Those listed provide an idea of how an assessment can be conducted. For more details, refer to the associated *Performance Guide* or divisional exam guides.
- Assessment Criteria:** Representing the “level of standard,” assessment criteria outline performance details that specify to what level the learning outcomes have been met. This does not vary between examiners or divisions.
- Assessment 6-point Scale:** Throughout the PSIA-AASI professional development and certification system, all assessment criteria are measured by means of the following 6-point assessment scale.
1. Essential elements are not observed or not present.
  2. Essential elements are beginning to appear.
  3. Essential elements appear, but not with consistency.
  4. Essential elements appear regularly at a satisfactory level.
  5. Essential elements appear frequently, above the required level.
  6. Essential elements appear continuously, at a superior level.

## People Skills

People skills are about communicating in effective ways to develop trust and achieve favorable relationships. Building rapport with students depends on instructors' self-awareness and their abilities to identify and adapt to the guests' needs, motivations, and emotions. For students to feel confident taking risks and being open to new learning, instructors must first establish trust among the group.

### Fundamentals

- Develop relationships based on trust.
- Engage in meaningful two-way communication.
- Identify, understand, and manage your emotions and actions.
- Recognize and influence the behaviors, motivations, and emotions of others.



## Level I – People Skills

### Overview of People Skills at Level I Proficiency

Level I instructors exhibit a basic understanding of the people-skill fundamentals, using them to develop trust within the learning environment. They show awareness of the likely needs and emotions of people new to snowsports and communicate clearly to the group, showing respect, patience, and professionalism while providing objective feedback. Level I instructors demonstrate self-awareness by reflecting on their own emotional tendencies and adapting to feedback from others.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level I instructor...

	Communication	Self-Awareness and Self-Management	Relationships with Others
Learning Outcomes	Engages in meaningful verbal and non-verbal communication with the group as a whole.	Explains and demonstrates the basic concepts of self-awareness and self-management.	Identifies likely motivations and emotions of individuals and understands group dynamics.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, videos, seminars, presentations, individual teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing verbal and non-verbal communication with trainers, peers, and mentors.</li> <li>• Understanding professionalism, behavioral responses to emotions, and the roles of instructor self-awareness and self-management in the snowsports learning environment.</li> <li>• Identifying active listening strategies, motivation tactics, emotional needs of the group, and the role of social awareness in group dynamics.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and also between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, an individual or group interview with examiner(s), video analysis, simulated or real lessons, and presentations (with discussion) on self-reflection to examiners, trainers, and peers.		
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use verbal and non-verbal communication in a professional manner.</li> <li>• Ask questions to learn about others.</li> <li>• Deliver objective feedback.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the concepts of self-awareness and self-management and identify basic tactics to manage behavioral responses to emotions.</li> <li>• Exhibit positive behavior in response to feedback.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate group interaction to build group dynamics.</li> <li>• Anticipate and address group and individual safety and physiological needs.</li> <li>• Identify the motivations and emotions of students.</li> </ul>

## Level II – People Skills

### Overview of People Skills at Level II Proficiency

Level II instructors exhibit a more refined understanding of the people-skill fundamentals, using them to develop trust with all individuals. They demonstrate awareness of the goals, motivations, and emotional needs of each student in the group and use active listening and verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to build connections. Level II instructors demonstrate awareness of their own tendencies and develops strategies to address them.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level II instructor...

	Communication	Self-Awareness and Self-Management	Relationships with Others
Learning Outcomes	Engages in and adapts verbal and non-verbal, two-way communication with individuals and subsets of the group.	Identifies their strengths and weaknesses and manages their behaviors and emotions.	Adapts to the motivations and emotions of individuals – and the interpersonal dynamics within the group – to promote trust.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, videos, seminars, presentations, individual teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using effective verbal and non-verbal communication to promote group dynamics, provide behavior-based feedback, and demonstrate active listening.</li> <li>• Observing and managing instructor self-awareness and self-management in the snowsports learning environment in general and, specifically, for the learner through personal reflection of emotions and behavioral responses to emotions.</li> <li>• Recognizing individual motivations and emotions, interpersonal challenges, and the role of social awareness in interpersonal and group dynamics among the group members.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and also between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, an individual or group interview with examiner(s), video analysis, simulated or real lessons, and presentations (with discussion) on self-reflection to examiners, trainers, and peers.		
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt verbal and non-verbal communication based on observations of individuals and the group.</li> <li>• Use varied, active-listening tactics to learn about others.</li> <li>• Deliver objective feedback that accounts for the emotions of subsets within the group.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and manage behavioral responses to common situations and emotions.</li> <li>• Identify personal strengths and weaknesses.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster interpersonal relationships to support positive group dynamics.</li> <li>• Anticipate and address group and individual needs for belonging.</li> <li>• Adapt to the motivations and emotions of individuals and subsets of the group.</li> </ul>



## Level III – People Skills

### Overview of People Skills at Level III Proficiency

Level III instructors exhibit a refined understanding of the people-skill fundamentals, using them to develop trust with and between all students through the entire lesson. They actively support the emotional needs of individuals while managing and influencing group dynamics to maintain and promote trust. Instructors at this level anticipate challenges and adapt their own style of interaction to achieve favorable outcomes and tailor experiences to individuals. Level III instructors demonstrate growth in self-awareness and can identify their own emotional intelligence and behavioral management.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level III instructor...

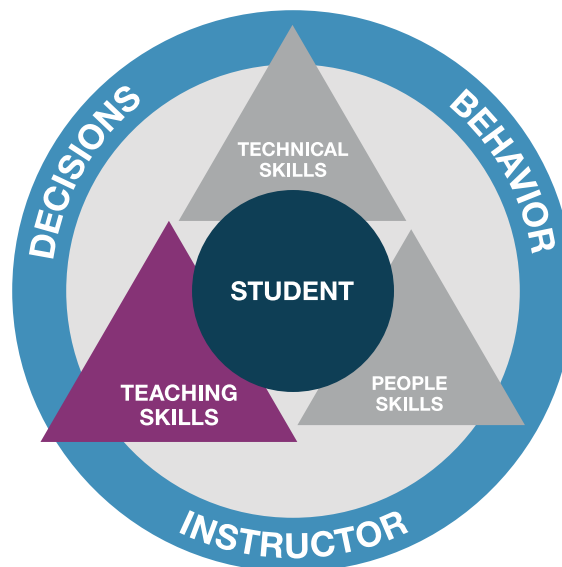
	Communication	Self-Awareness and Self-Management	Relationships with Others
Learning Outcomes	Engages in and adapts verbal and non-verbal, two-way communication with all individuals.	Leverages strengths, anticipates challenges, and adapts behaviors to positively affect others.	Manages the unique motivations and emotions of each individual and the interpersonal dynamics of a group to develop trust.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, videos, seminars, presentations, individual teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting active listening, seeking and providing feedback, and adapting verbal and non-verbal communication accordingly.</li> <li>• Predicting emotional triggers and reactions, adapting behavioral responses, and having insight into the roles of instructor self-awareness and self-management in the snowsports learning environment for the learner in general, and, specifically, for themselves.</li> <li>• Anticipating and proactively intervening in challenges, demonstrating adaptation through situational awareness, managing motivations of all, and promoting group cohesion.</li> <li>• Leveraging social awareness to enhance interpersonal dynamics, esteem, and positive group dynamics.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Activities	Assessment activities for these learning outcomes vary – Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and also between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, an individual or group interview with examiners, video analysis, simulated or real lessons, and presentations (with discussion) on self-reflection to examiners, trainers, and peers.		
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customize verbal and non-verbal communication to match or influence individuals.</li> <li>• Use varied, active-listening tactics to personalize the experience.</li> <li>• Deliver objective feedback that supports the emotions of the individuals in the group.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively identify emotional responses and adapt behaviors for positive group and individual interactions.</li> <li>• Capitalize on strengths and manage weaknesses to deliver excellent experiences.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the group dynamic to positively influence individual experiences.</li> <li>• Anticipate and address group and individual needs for esteem.</li> <li>• Support and manage the motivations and emotions of all.</li> </ul>

## Teaching Skills

With trust established using people skills, teaching skills *strengthen* the connection between the instructor and student. Teaching skills create an engaging environment in which to foster student learning. To maximize learning, instructors plan, implement, and adapt the learning experience, and give students an opportunity to reflect on their experiences.

### Fundamentals

- Collaborate on long-term goals and short-term objectives.
- Manage information, activities, terrain selection, and pacing.
- Promote play, experimentation, and exploration.
- Facilitate the learner's ability to reflect upon experiences and sensations.
- Adapt to the changing needs of the learner.
- Manage emotional and physical risk.



## Level I – Teaching Skills

### Overview of Teaching Skills at Level I Proficiency

Level I instructors apply the teaching-skill fundamentals, allowing them to plan and organize an engaging learning experience. They present a basic progression for the *beginner/novice* student, using study, training, and teaching experiences. A Level I instructor makes minor adjustments to learning experiences based on students' needs, desires, and abilities. They facilitate learning by communicating changes in student performance relative to outcomes.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level I instructor...

	Assess and Plan	Implement	Reflect/Review
Learning Outcomes	Plans learning outcomes and organizes progressive learning experiences relevant to beginner/novice students.	Facilitates learning experiences that guide students toward the agreed-upon outcome and engages them in the process.	Communicates performance changes that target the learning outcome to help students identify that a change has been made.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, videos, seminars, presentations, The Matrix (i.e., PSIA-AASI video library and e-learning tools), reading, workbooks, home-area training programs, individual teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning learning outcomes for beginner/novice students.</li> <li>• Implementing learning experiences for beginner/novice students.</li> <li>• Identifying and communicating performance changes.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and also between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, an individual or group interview with examiner(s), video analysis, and presentations (with discussion) on self-reflection to examiners, trainers, and peers. In a simulated or real lesson environment, assessment may entail the demonstrated ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan effective learning experiences for beginner/novice students that work toward desired learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Teach effectively in the beginner/novice lesson environment.</li> <li>• Identify and communicate performance changes.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess students to identify student motivations, performance, and understanding.</li> <li>• Collaborate with students to select a basic progression with clear direction and focus.</li> <li>• Plan lessons that involve productive use of movement, practice time, and terrain.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pace a clear progression to allow students appropriate time to explore and/or play toward desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Organize the learning environment to align with the initial assessment of the group.</li> <li>• Give the group relevant information (basic descriptions, demonstrations, and feedback) that encourages learning.</li> <li>• Limit physical risk.</li> <li>• Manage levels of emotional risk to maintain engagement in the learning environment.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate changes in performance.</li> <li>• Relate changes in performance to lesson outcomes.</li> </ul>

## Level II – Teaching Skills

### Overview of Teaching Skills at Level II Proficiency

Level II instructors demonstrate proficiency in the teaching-skill fundamentals, relying on experience gained while teaching and training. They facilitate learning by planning and adapting the lesson experience based on the needs, desires, and abilities of *intermediate* students. Level II instructors help students recognize and assess their changes in performance.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level II instructor...

	Assess and Plan	Implement	Reflect/Review
Learning Outcomes	Plans learning outcomes and progressive learning experiences and adapts to the changing needs of intermediate students.	Facilitates learning experiences and adapts them as necessary to guide students toward agreed-upon outcomes and engage them in the process.	Helps students recognize, reflect upon, and assess experiences to apply understanding and performance changes to desired outcomes.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, videos, seminars, presentations, The Matrix (i.e., PSIA-AASI video library and e-learning tools), reading, workbooks, home-area training programs, individual teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning lessons, activities, and progressions for intermediate students.</li> <li>• Implementing and adapting learning experiences for intermediate students.</li> <li>• Helping intermediate students identify and understand performance changes.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and also between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, an individual or group interview with examiner(s), video analysis, presentations (with discussion) on self-reflection to examiners and peers. In a simulated or real lesson environment, assessment may entail the demonstrated ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students recognize, reflect upon, and assess their performance changes.</li> <li>• Organize creative, playful, and flowing learning experiences that work toward desired learning outcomes for intermediate students.</li> <li>• Implement and adapt learning experiences in the intermediate lesson environment.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodically reassess student motivations, current performance, and understanding.</li> <li>• Collaborate with students to establish and adapt a lesson plan with clear direction and focus.</li> <li>• Plan playful and/or exploratory lessons with productive use of movement, practice time, and terrain.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pace learning activities to allow students to explore and/or play toward desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Adapt the learning environment to align with the needs of the group.</li> <li>• Provide clear and relevant information (descriptions, demonstrations, and feedback) that encourages learning.</li> <li>• Manage physical risk to promote engagement in the learning environment.</li> <li>• Manage levels of emotional risk to enhance engagement in the learning environment.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help students recognize and understand change in performance relative to outcomes.</li> <li>• Help students apply gained skills to skiing situations.</li> </ul>

## Level III – Teaching Skills

### Overview of Teaching Skills at Level III Proficiency

Level III instructors demonstrate mastery of the teaching fundamentals, based on experience gained while teaching and training. They plan, implement, and customize an engaging learning experience for *advanced* students. Level III instructors make proactive adjustments to learning experiences based on group and individual student needs, desires, and abilities. They foster learning by helping students interpret their changes in performance, develop new understanding, and apply what they've learned.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level III instructor...

	Assess and Plan	Implement	Reflect/Review
Learning Outcomes	Plans learning outcomes and creates individualized experiences around a common theme for advanced students.	Individualizes learning experiences to guide students toward agreed-upon outcomes and optimizes student engagement in the process.	Fosters the ability to recognize, reflect upon, and assess experiences to enhance understanding and apply what was learned.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, videos, seminars, presentations, The Matrix (i.e., PSIA-AASI video library and e-learning tools), reading, workbooks, home-area training programs, individual teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning advanced group lessons in the training environment.</li> <li>• Implementing and adapting learning experiences for advanced students.</li> <li>• Identifying and communicating performance changes to help the student develop new understanding and application of what they have learned.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and also between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include activities such as an online exam, individual or group interview with examiner(s), video analysis, presentation (with discussion) on self-reflection to examiners and peers. In a simulated or real lesson environment, assessment may entail the demonstrated ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan individualized, creative, playful, and flowing lesson experiences that work toward desired learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Implement and adapt learning experiences in the lesson environment for individuals within a group.</li> <li>• Help students recognize, reflect upon, and assess their performance changes to develop new understanding and application of what they have learned.</li> </ul>		
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually assess student motivations, performance, and understanding.</li> <li>• Collaborate with students to establish and adapt a lesson plan with a common theme, a clear direction, and individualized focus throughout the lesson.</li> <li>• Plan creative, playful, and exploratory learning experiences in which movement, practice time, and terrain are optimized for individuals.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customize and pace learning activities to allow students to explore and/or play toward desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Tailor the learning environment to align with the needs of individuals.</li> <li>• Provide clear and relevant information (descriptions, demonstrations, and feedback) that encourages individualized learning.</li> <li>• Proactively manage physical risk to promote engagement in the learning environment.</li> <li>• Manage levels of emotional risk to optimize individual engagement in the learning environment.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the students to communicate change in performance and/or understanding.</li> <li>• Collaborate with students to apply gained skills to skiing situations.</li> </ul>

## Technical Skills

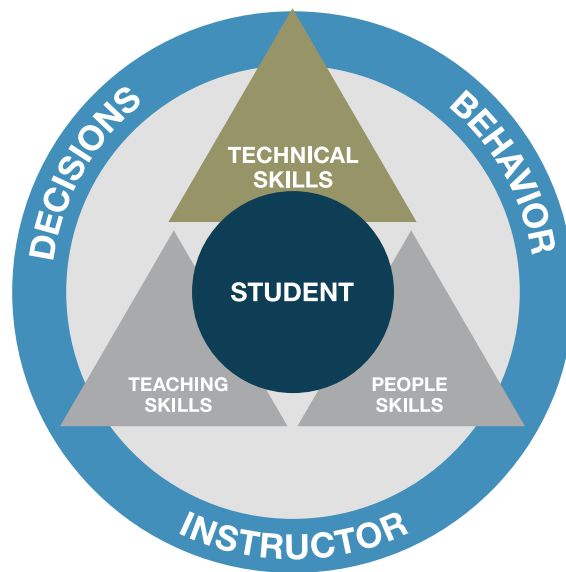
Technical skills bring teaching concepts to life with practical applications adapted to the student's ability level or desired outcome. These skills relate to the instructor's understanding of fundamental skiing mechanics and applying that understanding in lessons. Technical skills represent the ability to perform, understand, and explain the sport. In sharing technical skills, the instructor communicates certain discipline-specific aspects of movement and gives accurate demonstrations.

### Professional-Knowledge Fundamentals

- Convey and apply accurate technical information.
- Observe, evaluate, and prescribe (through movement analysis).

### Cross Country Skiing Fundamentals (XC Fundamentals)

- Control the relationship of the center of mass to the base of support to direct pressure along the length of the ski(s).
- Control the timing of body movements while regulating power application through the skis and poles to optimize propulsion (Push-Off).
- Control the relationship of the center of mass to the base of support from ski to ski (Weight Transfer)
- Utilize body movements to manage momentum (Glide).



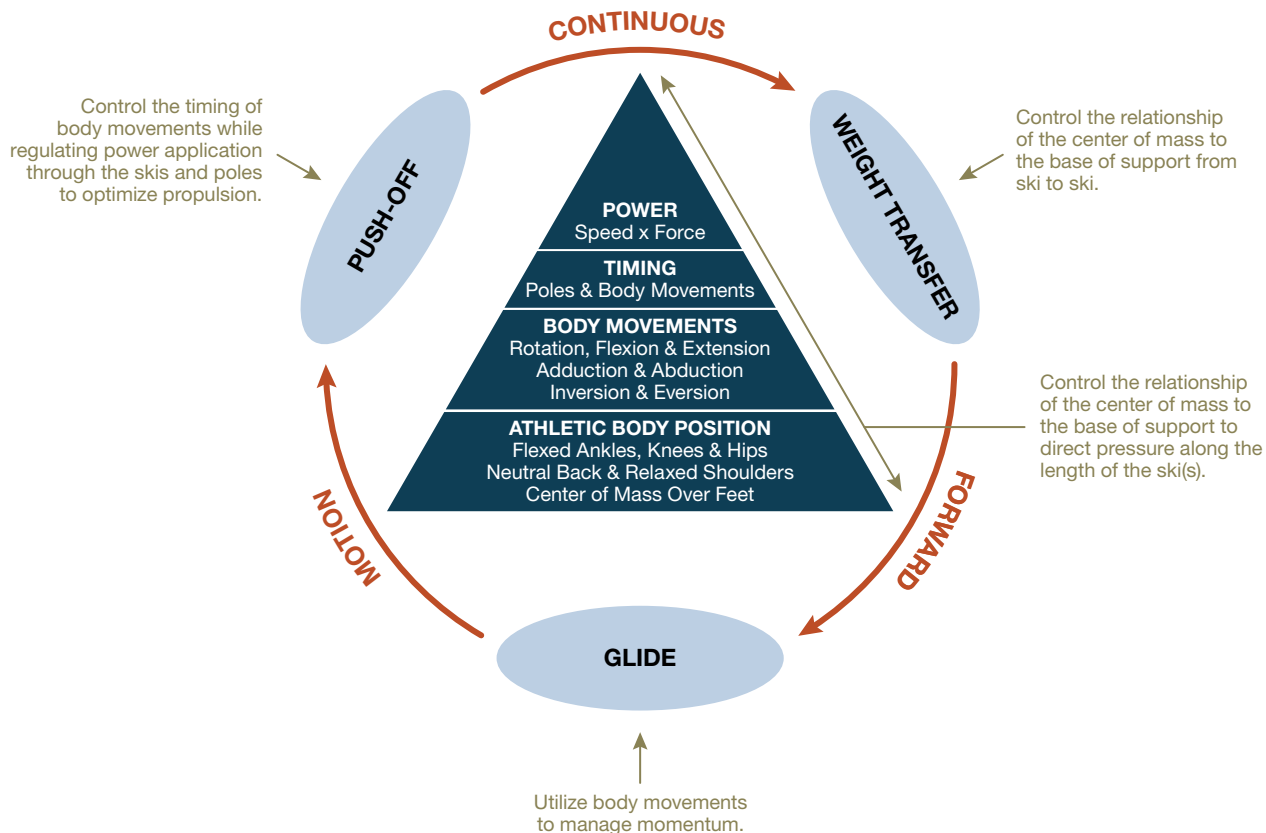
### Cross Country Technical Model (XC Technical Model)

The PSIA Cross Country Technical Model can be used as a framework to organize, understand, teach, and analyze the fundamentals of cross country skiing.

The Cross Country Technical Model has two interrelated components. At the center of the model is the Sports Performance Pyramid, which highlights the essential elements of a skier’s body mechanics – body position, body movements, timing, and power. The outer circle of the model, known as the Cross Country Skills Concept, represents the three skills of cross country skiing – weight transfer, push-off, and glide. These three skills blend together to produce continuous forward motion.

The model illustrates how a skier’s body mechanics, the Sports Performance Pyramid, connect with the three cross country skiing skills (outside circle). Skiers control body mechanics of the Sports Performance Pyramid (inner triangle) to perform the skills (outer ring) and affect ski performance.

The four fundamentals of cross country skiing are incorporated in the whole Cross Country Technical Model. A fundamental statement defines each of the three skiing skills found in the outer ring. The fourth fundamental statement relates to maintaining an athletic body position while applying movements, timing, and power (see figure below).



## Level I – Technical Skills

### Overview of Technical Skills at Level I Proficiency

Level I instructors ski competently in beginner and intermediate terrain, adjusting and adapting their skiing in order to demonstrate skills and tasks to their students in beginner lessons. Level I instructors use PSIA-AASI resources (both those geared to cross country instructors and snowsports instructors in general) to access information and gain knowledge. They explain interactions between body movements and ski performance at the beginner/novice skill level and guide students to more effective performance.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level I instructor...

	Skiing Performance	Technical Understanding	Movement Analysis
Learning Outcomes	Adjusts and adapts the XC Fundamentals to demonstrate specific outcomes for both classic and skate technique at the beginner skill level in beginner and some intermediate terrain.	Uses current PSIA cross country resources to identify and describe a skier's performance at the beginner skier level.	Accurately describes cause-and-effect relationships between body and ski performance and provides a relevant prescription for change for beginner skiers.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practicing cross country fundamentals in isolation and blends; incorporating various tempos, speeds, and power in beginner and intermediate terrain and varied snow conditions.</li> <li>Receiving and incorporating feedback at a preparation clinic or from a coach/mentor.</li> <li>Off-snow activities, such as watching video, taking e-learning courses, and reading manuals and associated education materials.</li> <li>Increasing overall fitness and athleticism (endurance, strength, agility, kinesthetic awareness), and gaining an understanding of pacing while skiing. This can entail skiing continuously for at least 15 minutes (solo or by participating in citizen ski events and/or races) and cross training.</li> </ul>	Benefits from learning experiences that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group activities, with instructors referencing the XC Fundamentals and XC Technical Model while performing and describing various tasks.</li> <li>Analyzing inspirational, highly accurate skiing to better understand ideal applications of the cross country fundamentals.</li> <li>Taking e-learning courses and studying recent PSIA-AASI educational materials in various formats.</li> <li>Attending local, regional, and national education events.</li> </ul>	Benefits from learning experiences that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group activities, with instructors referencing the XC Fundamentals and XC Technical Model while performing and describing various tasks.</li> <li>Analyzing inspirational, highly accurate skiing to better understand ideal application of the cross country fundamentals.</li> <li>Exploring how to apply and adjust DIRT (duration, intensity, rate, and timing) to fundamentals, based on task and tactics.</li> <li>Describing how a skier's performance is affected by different types, adjustments, and sizes of equipment – and wax choices – in various of terrain and snow conditions.</li> </ul>
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tasks from the Level I section of the <i>Performance Guide</i> that isolate and blend skills in the beginner skill level in varied terrain.</li> <li>Adjusting speed and the power applied to achieve a desired outcome.</li> <li>Free-skiing in beginner terrain for up to 15 minutes.</li> </ul>	Performs assessment activities that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking e-learning courses and a written test that reference PSIA technical material.</li> <li>Describing recent performance(s), referencing XC Fundamentals and the XC Technical Model and identifying the ideal performance of skiing outcomes.</li> <li>Describing differentiating characteristics of classic and skate ski equipment.</li> </ul>	While watching a beginner skier via video or live action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes the cause-and-effect relationships of the skier's body position and body movements relative to ski performance in one skill of the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>Provides a prescription for change, focusing on body position and body movements for one skill of the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>Observes and describes the skier's equipment choice and compares it to the ideal choice the student could make with regard to equipment.</li> </ul>
Assessment Criteria	Demonstrates the cross country fundamentals at beginner classic and skate skill levels by adjusting tactical choices, speed, and ski performance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage ski and pole push to create forward movement.</li> <li>Control the center of mass (CM) over the base of support (fore/aft and side to side).</li> <li>Glide on one ski.</li> <li>Control speed and change direction on downhills.</li> <li>Show versatility in beginner terrain.</li> <li>Continuously ski in beginner and some intermediate terrain for up to 15 minutes.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately identify and describe personal and/or an observed skier performance, using body position and body movements of one XC skiing skill.</li> <li>Accurately describe ideal skier performance using body position and body movements of one XC skiing skill.</li> <li>Convey understanding by changing personal skiing performance based on feedback at the beginner level.</li> <li>Identify and reference information from current PSIA resources relative to skier performance and desired outcome.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe a skier's performance, focusing on body position and body movements for one XC skill.</li> <li>Describe the cause-and-effect relationship between a skier's body position and body movements with regard to the skis' performance for one XC skill.</li> <li>Provide a relevant prescription for change in a skier's body position and body movements for one XC skill to create a desired outcome at the beginner level.</li> <li>Observe and describe how equipment choices affect performance and safety for beginner skiers.</li> </ul>



## Level II – Technical Skills

### Overview of Technical Skills at Level II Proficiency

Level II instructors ski competently in beginner, intermediate, and some advanced terrain, adjusting and adapting their skiing in order to demonstrate skills and tasks to their students in intermediate lessons. They relate the Cross Country Skiing Fundamentals and Cross Country Technical Model to a skier's performance through observation, evaluation, and prescription to help beginner and intermediate skiers achieve desired performance objectives.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level II instructor...

	Skiing Performance	Technical Understanding	Movement Analysis
Learning Outcomes	Adjusts and adapts the XC Fundamentals to demonstrate specific outcomes for both classic and skate technique in the intermediate skill level in intermediate and some advanced terrain.	Uses current PSIA XC resources to evaluate a skier's performance, considering equipment in the intermediate skill level.	Accurately describes cause-and-effect relationships between body and ski performance and provides relevant prescription for change for beginning and intermediate skiers.
Learning Experiences	<p>Benefits from learning experiences that can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practicing the XC Fundamentals in isolation and blends; incorporating various tempos, speeds, and power application in intermediate and advanced terrain and varied snow conditions.</li> <li>Receiving and incorporating feedback at a preparation clinic or from a coach/mentor</li> <li>Increasing overall fitness athleticism (endurance, strength, agility, kinesthetic awareness), and gaining an understanding of pacing while skiing. This can entail skiing continuously for at least 20 minutes (either solo or by participating in citizen ski events and/or races) and cross training.</li> <li>Off-snow activities, such as watching videos, taking e-learning courses, and reading manuals and associated educational materials.</li> </ul>	<p>Benefits from learning experiences that can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group activities, with instructors referencing the XC Fundamentals and XC Technical Model while performing and describing various tasks.</li> <li>Analyzing inspirational, highly accurate skiing to better understand ideal applications of the cross country fundamentals.</li> <li>Exploring how different choices related to DIRT (duration, intensity, rate, and timing), equipment, and wax affect the cross country fundamentals, based on task and tactics.</li> <li>Taking e-learning courses and studying recent PSIA-AASI educational materials in various formats.</li> <li>Attending local, regional, and national education events.</li> </ul>	<p>Benefits from learning experiences that can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group activities, with instructors referencing the XC Fundamentals and XC Technical Model while performing and describing various tasks.</li> <li>Analyzing inspirational, highly accurate skiing to better understand ideal application of the cross country fundamentals.</li> <li>Exploring how to apply and adjust DIRT (duration, intensity, rate, and timing) to fundamentals, based on task and tactics.</li> <li>Describing how a skier's performance is affected by different types, adjustments, and sizes of equipment – and wax choices – in various of terrain and snow conditions.</li> </ul>
Assessment Activities	<p>Performs assessment activities that can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tasks from the Level II section of the <i>Performance Guide</i> that isolate and blend skills through the intermediate skill level while varying terrain, speed, and power.</li> <li>Free-skiing in beginner and intermediate terrain for up to 20 minutes.</li> </ul>	<p>Performs assessment activities that can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking e-learning courses and a written test that reference PSIA technical material.</li> <li>Describing recent performance(s) – personal and/or observed – and describing the ideal performance of skiing outcomes, referencing XC Fundamentals and the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>Describing performance characteristics of both classic and skate ski equipment.</li> </ul>	<p>While watching an intermediate skier (student or peer) via video or live action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes the ski and body performance, using the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>Can identify and describe the cause-and-effect relationship between body and ski performance.</li> <li>Observes and evaluates performances of beginner and intermediate skiers, based on equipment and wax selection.</li> <li>Provides a prescription for change, using the XC Technical Model to achieve the objective or skier's goal.</li> </ul>
Assessment Criteria	<p>Demonstrates the cross country fundamentals at intermediate classic and skate skill levels by adjusting tactical choices, speed, and ski performance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage ski and pole push to increase speed.</li> <li>Control the center of mass (CM) over the base of support (fore/aft and side to side).</li> <li>Control the duration of ski glide.</li> <li>Manage speed and change of direction on downhills.</li> <li>Show versatility in intermediate terrain.</li> <li>Continuously ski in beginner and intermediate terrain for up to 20 minutes.</li> </ul>	<p>Consistently demonstrates their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately identify and describe personal and/or an observed skier performance, referencing at least two aspects of the cross country Sports Performance Pyramid and all skills of the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>Compare personal and/or an observed performance to desired outcome, referencing the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>Convey understanding by changing personal skiing performance, based on comparison to desired performance and feedback.</li> <li>Accurately recognize and use information from current PSIA-AASI resources relative to personal performance or desired outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Consistently demonstrates their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe a skier's performance, using any two aspects of the XC Performance Pyramid and all skills in the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>Describe the cause-and-effect relationship between the skier's performance and the skis' performance, using two aspects of the cross country Sports Performance Pyramid in all XC skills.</li> <li>Provide a relevant prescription for change, using two aspects of the Cross Country Performance Pyramid and all XC skills to create a change in desired outcome through the intermediate level.</li> <li>Observe and describe how equipment and wax choices affect performance and safety for intermediate skiers.</li> </ul>

## Level III – Technical Skills

### Overview of Technical Skills at Level III Proficiency

Level III instructors ski competently in a wide variety of terrain while adapting their ski performance and accurately applying the Cross Country Skiing Fundamentals to achieve the desired outcome. They precisely illustrate the Cross Country Skiing Fundamentals and all aspects of the Cross Country Technical Model while delivering beginner, intermediate, and advanced lessons. They have a working knowledge of current PSIA cross country educational resources as well as industry-wide information. Level III instructors evaluate complex relationships of body and ski performance as they relate to the Cross Country Skiing Fundamentals and the Cross Country Technical Model to enhance a skier’s desired performance objectives.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a Level III instructor...

	Skiing Performance	Technical Understanding	Movement Analysis
Learning Outcomes	Demonstrates mastery of the XC Fundamentals in both classic and skate technique to demonstrate specific outcomes through the advanced skill level in a wide variety of terrain.	Utilizes current PSIA-AASI resources to evaluate a skier’s performance, considering terrain, tactics, equipment, and wax choices at all skill levels.	Accurately describes cause-and-effect relationships and provides relevant prescription for change for skiers at all skill levels.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicing the XC Fundamentals in isolation blends; incorporating various tactics, tempos, speeds, and power application in a wide variety of terrain and most snow conditions in all zones.</li> <li>• Receiving and incorporating feedback at a preparation clinic or from a coach/mentor.</li> <li>• Increasing overall fitness and athleticism (endurance, strength, ability, kinesthetic awareness), and gaining an understanding of pacing while skiing. This can entail skiing continuously for at least 30 minutes (either solo or by participating in citizen ski events and/or races) and cross training.</li> <li>• Off-snow activities, such as watching video, taking e-learning courses, and reading manuals and associated education material.</li> </ul>	Benefits from learning experiences that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activities, with instructors referencing the XC Fundamentals and XC Technical Model while performing and describing various tasks.</li> <li>• Analyzing inspirational, highly accurate skiing to better understand ideal applications of the XC Fundamentals.</li> <li>• Exploring how different choices related to DIRT (duration, intensity, rate, and timing), equipment, and wax affect the cross country fundamentals, based on task and tactics.</li> <li>• Taking e-learning classes and studying recent PSIA-AASI educational materials in various formats.</li> <li>• Attending local, regional, and national education events.</li> </ul>	Benefits from learning experiences that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activities, with instructors referencing the XC Fundamentals and XC Technical Model while performing and describing various tasks.</li> <li>• Analyzing inspirational, highly accurate skiing to better understand ideal applications of the XC Fundamentals.</li> <li>• Exploring how to adjust and apply DIRT (duration, intensity, rate and timing) to the XC Fundamentals, based on task and tactics.</li> <li>• Using and exploring different types, adjustments, and sizes of equipment and wax in multiple types of terrain and snow conditions.</li> </ul>
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks from the Level III section of the <i>Performance Guide</i> that isolate and blend skills through the advanced skill level in varied terrain.</li> <li>• Adjusting speed and power to optimize performance.</li> <li>• Free-skiing in a wide variety of terrain for up to 30 minutes.</li> </ul>	Performs assessment activities that can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking e-learning courses and a written test that reference PSIA technical material.</li> <li>• Analyzing personal performance based on blended cause-and-effect relationships using the XC Fundamentals and/or the XC Technical Model, including tactical elements.</li> <li>• Comparing personal performance to ideal performance.</li> <li>• Analyzing personal performance based on equipment and wax choices.</li> </ul>	While watching a skier (student or peer) via video or live action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the ski and body performance, referencing the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>• Identifies and describes the cause-and-effect relationship between body and ski performance relating to the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>• Provides a prescription for change using all aspects of the XC Technical Model to achieve the objective or skier’s goal.</li> <li>• Observe and describe how equipment and wax choices affect performance and safety for advanced/expert skiers.</li> </ul>
Assessment Criteria	Demonstrates the cross country fundamentals through advanced classic and skate skill levels by adjusting tactical choices, power, speed, and ski performance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control the power of the ski and pole push to optimize speed.</li> <li>• Optimize the center of mass (CM) in relation to the base of support (fore/aft and side to side).</li> <li>• Control optimal duration of glide.</li> <li>• Optimize speed and change of direction on downhill.</li> <li>• Demonstrate versatility in a wide variety of terrain.</li> <li>• Continuously ski in a wide variety of terrain for up to 30 minutes.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurately describe personal and an observed skier performance using the XC Technical Model, accounting for terrain and tactical considerations.</li> <li>• Compare and analyze personal performance with desired skier performance, describing tactics and the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>• Convey understanding by changing personal skiing performance based on comparison to desired performance and feedback in the advanced level.</li> <li>• Accurately recognize, utilize, and compare information from PSIA and related resources relative to personal performance or desired performance.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectively describe a skier’s performance, referencing any skill and all aspects of the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>• Describe cause-and-effect relationship between the skier’s performance and ski performance, referencing any and all aspects of the XC Technical Model.</li> <li>• Provide relevant prescription for change, referencing the XC Technical Model to create a change in desired outcome.</li> <li>• Evaluate equipment-based cause-and-effect relationships relative to the student and their objectives in all skier ability levels.</li> </ul>