



BRITISH ORIENTEERING

**UNIVERSITY
CLUB
TRAINING
PACK**



SUMMER 2026

HOW TO USE THIS TRAINING PACK

This training pack has been created by British Orienteering to provide university clubs with structure, ideas, and practical guidance for delivering training sessions and skills development activities.

Who has this been designed for?

This resource is suitable for university clubs at all levels of experience.

Club coaches, committee members, and activity leaders can use the ideas and session plans to:

- Introduce orienteering to beginners
- Develop skills across a range of abilities
- Support participation in local events and university competitions

The pack can be used throughout the year, from Freshers' Week activities to preparing members for competitions.

Sessions should be delivered by individuals who feel confident leading the activity. All sessions should take place in appropriate, controlled environments (e.g. campus, parks, or woodland). Participants (particularly beginners) should be encouraged to carry a mobile phone in order to be able to contact for support if needed.

What is included?

- **Low-to-no equipment session ideas** for use on campus or in local green spaces
- **MapRun training guidance**, including how to create your own courses
- **A University Club Training Template and Programme** (developed by Richard Gamble, Northern Ireland Development Officer and qualified British Orienteering coach)
- Supporting resources and British Orienteering materials (available on request)

What parts should we use?

Clubs can use this pack in whatever way works best for them:

- Follow a full training programme
- Select individual session ideas
- Use it as inspiration to develop your own sessions

There is no single "right way" to use this resource, adapt it to suit your members, your environment, and your capacity as a committee.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with British Orienteering's University Officer, Gracie at ggrant@britishorienteering.org.uk.

LITTLE/NO EQUIPMENT EVENT FORMATS

There are many different ways you can run Orienteering courses across campus and local parks/wood without specialist orienteering equipment, training control punches or flags.

SCORE/LINEAR COURSE

You can create orienteering courses using existing mapped areas or [OpenOrienteeringMap](#), by placing streamers or a tag to find (it doesn't need to be an orienteering kite if you don't have any available).

Equipment

- Printed map of the area with control points marked on.
- Control descriptions score sheet, to be used for answers. This sheet needs to include all the control numbers for participants to write the code next to.
- Streamers to mark controls and/or tags to hold code .
- Pens/pencils.
- Timer (watch or phone).



Planning

1. Find the map of the area you would like to use, this could be:
 - a. An orienteering map from your local club
 - b. Use of OpenOrienteeringMap
 - c. A Google Maps screengrab
 - d. For any additional help on this, please get in touch with Gracie (ggrant@britishorienteering.org.uk)
2. Using PurplePen (a free platform which allows you to plot orienteering courses) or OpenOrienteeringMap, plan a course with your control points
3. Print the maps alongside a score sheet (you could print these double sided on one page of paper) Participants will need the score sheet to write down the control code, to show they visited the control
4. Create the tags that you will place at each control point - add a control number and a code to each (a couple of letters or numbers) for participants to write down to prove they visited the checkpoint
 - a. There is a template you can print, [here](#)
 - b. If you laminate your tags, and its not raining, you can write control numbers and codes on them with whiteboard pens, allowing them to be wiped clean and reused.

Setup on the day

- Place your controls out on the day of the activity (ensure each control includes a code!)
- Timing can be easily done on a phone or watch (have someone write start times down)
- Participants can track their run with GPS for reliability on controls being visited in the correct order
- Set a time limit if a score course, and impose any penalties for late returns

LITTLE/NO EQUIPMENT EVENT FORMATS

SCORE/LINEAR COURSE continued





How it Works

- At the start, participants receive a map and score sheet and begin the course.
- Timings and order of visit depends on whether a score or linear course has been planned.
- At each control, participants record the answer or code on their score sheet.
- Once participants have completed the course or are ready to return for a score course, participants head to the finish, where their return time is recorded.

Scoring

- If you have organised a linear course, results are determined by the time taken to complete the course.
- If you have organised a score course, you may want to label different controls with different values for scoring. Points are awarded per control visited. You can also apply score penalties for any late returns.

What skills does this help develop?

-  Route choice
-  Decision-making
-  Map reading and awareness
-  Puts learned skills into practice

How to make this more complicated for experienced orienteers?

For a score course, introduce rules, for example: all even numbered controls collected first then odd.

LITTLE/NO EQUIPMENT EVENT FORMATS

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STREET-O

A Street-O Score Event is a low-equipment orienteering activity where participants navigate around campus or an urban area, locating features listed on a clue sheet. Instead of fixed controls, participants identify and record street items to track where they have been. For example, noting down the number on the lamppost or telegraph pole where the control is.

Equipment

- Printed maps (simple campus or street map)
- Clue sheet listing features to find and answer
- Pens/pencils
- Phone: Someone to note down start times of participants for timing. Answers could also be digital.

Planning/Setup

1. Create a map: Use a simple campus map, OpenStreetMap, or Google Maps. Make sure to clearly define the event boundary.
2. Prepare the clue sheet. Include 15–25 items such as:
 - a. Postbox (record postbox number or collection time)
 - b. Lamp post (record number on post)
 - c. Fire hydrant (number)
 - d. Building name/sign
 - e. Bus stop code or name
3. Set a time limit: Typical: 30–60 minutes

Each clue must:

- Be observable
- Have a unique answer
- Have an assigned number of points:
 - Easy/central items = 10 points
 - Further/difficult items = 20–30 points

How it works (for participants)

The task is to:

- Visit as many checkpoints as possible within the time limit in any order
- Identify the correct feature at each location
- Record the required answer on their sheet
- Visit locations in any order
- Return before the time limit ends
- Late return = point penalties (e.g. -10 per minute)

They will receive:

- A map
- A clue sheet

Scoring

- Points are awarded for each correct answer
- The highest score wins
- Tie-breaker= Shortest time taken

Examples of Clubs Running Street-O
Events:

PFO

SLOW





MAPRUN



MapRun is a fantastic tool to utilise while planning activities for your club. There will likely be many events ready to use, just [download](#) and have a look on the app.

You can create a MapRun course basically anywhere. The area doesn't have to be mapped, as you can use [OpenOrienteeringMap](#) to pull a map of your chosen location.

How to create a course for MapRun

For detailed instructions on how to set up a permanent course, see the [About MapRun Information](#), where you can view details as a participant, club and planner.

If you are wanting to set up a permanent course, you will need to get in touch with your local club, to find a MapRun administrator who will be able to assist you with the set-up of the course. Get in touch with your local club if you already have contact with them, find your local club [here](#), or pop British Orienteering an email asking for an introduction.

CHECKSITES - Setting up a training course without being a MapRun admin

You can use MapRun Checksites, to create courses for your club activities, without needing to be a MapRun admin. See further information and where to upload your course, [here](#).

Checkpoints can be used for private activities such as university training, but cannot be used for competitive events.

Once your course is uploaded, you will receive a 6-digit code, which participants can then use to access the course for your training activity.

The Map

With MapRun, you can either use existing orienteering maps, or if an area hasn't been mapped previously, you can take the file from OpenOrienteeringMap, especially for urban areas.

Maps will need to be printed on A4 (no bigger), and the MapRun guide provides guidance on suitable scales for courses.

You will need your map as a **KMZ file** for Checksites.

The Course

On MapRun, you can create Line, Scatter or Score Courses - with these comes some personalisation around the value of controls for scores etc.

You will need a **KML file** starting with S1 and finishing with F1 for your course. You may also like to turn off location tracking.

On the app, participants will click the 'Cbsites' button, and enter the 6-digit code to begin the course.



MAPRUN



Where can you use MapRun?

- On Campus
- In local areas to your University
- In a local park or forest (provided you will have gps signal!)

Easy Instruction Video for Participants on how MapRun works:

Orienteering Ireland have put together a great video, explaining how MapRun works, and to get set-up. View the video, [here!](#) This could be great to share with members new to MapRun before they start a course.

Notes

MapRun is not a British Orienteering owned app, and any fees for full, published events are due to FNE Enterprises.

British Orienteering would advise that any training activity, including MapRun activities are added to British Orienteering's database for insurance purposes.

UNI CLUB ORIENTEERING TRAINING PROGRAMME



The idea of this template is to:

- Provide clubs with a programme of activities which are easy to plan, set up and run.
- Provide clubs with fun, social training activities aimed at bringing the skill levels of newcomers up to TD3/Orange level quickly.
- Equip newcomers with the skills to get off a campus map and have the confidence to attend local events.
- Prepare members to compete at the Universities Champs and BUCS on an appropriate course.

When putting this together, we have assumed there is limited resources/kit and coaching experience within the University club at present.

Key Competition dates (assuming similar to 2026):

- English Universities Orienteering Championships – end of Feb/beginning of March.
- British Universities & Colleges Sport Orienteering Champs – middle of March.
- Scottish Universities weekend - November

What does a good training session look like?

1. Fun!
2. Active. Work on a ratio of 80:20 for Participants active : Coach explanation/demo.
3. Appropriate level of challenge (not too easy but not too hard)
4. Progression of skills
5. Well equipped – enough resources - participants have a map each
6. Safe – consider risks and first aid when planning and delivering

Additional Online Resources

This training programme regularly refers to **British Orienteering's Instructor Cards** (usually acquired through the completion of the Instructor Qualification). British Orienteering are happy to share these with University Clubs to aid the delivery of these training sessions, please get in touch with Gracie (ggrant@britishorienteering.org.uk) for access to these.

Here is a good resource to use for progression at all levels: [Learn Orienteering](#). Some of the Basic Skills can be partly learned online, with the Advanced Skills being practiced during Sessions.

For Further Information:

- For more information regarding how you can be supported by British Orienteering or local clubs/coaches please contact Gracie Grant (British Orienteering, Universities and Access Officer) at:
ggrant@britishorienteering.org.uk

Please Note:

- This programme does not include physical fitness sessions, which you may wish to run in addition of this skills programme or additional fun competitions.
- If you do not have electronic timing, the MapRun app can be used to set up timed courses

Please get in touch with Gracie Grant (University & Access Officer), for access to the British Orienteering Instructor Cards.



| Session | Location | Aim/Purpose | Skills | Techniques | Resources |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | (see Appendix 1 Step system) | | |
| 1-Intro | Fresher Fair | Provide information /social /fun. | na | na | Club Flyer with contact details and the programme of training sessions and events. Maps, kite, thumb compass, dibber for discussion. |
| 2-Map Run | Campus / local park / local urban area | Social map run to introduce an orienteering map. | Steps A, B Understand map colours and symbols. Orientating the map using terrain. Use/run along paths, tracks and handrails only. | Steps A, B Folding map Thumbing Handrails | British Orienteering Instructor Card 7 Blank map (map without a course) per person. If you do not have an orienteering map of the campus, contact local club for a map of local park or use Openorienteeringmap to create a map of your local area. |
| 3-Map Run | Campus / local park / local urban area | Social map run in a new area - to build on knowledge and skills of how to read and run with an orienteering map. | Steps A, B Understand map colours and symbols. Orientating the map using terrain and compass. Don't always use handrails - cut corners. | Steps A, B Folding map Thumbing | As Session 2 above with the addition of compasses. |
| 4-Map Run | More challenging terrain (e.g. forest) | As session 3 + Relocation | As session 3 + Relating map to ground | As session 3 | As session 3 Request map from local club. + BO Instructor Card 19 |
| 5-Star Exercise -> Short Loops | Campus / local park | Navigate independently to controls. Individual progression. | Steps C, D Using handrails or cutting corners if confident. | Steps C, D Check points on route. Catching features. Rough estimate for distance judgement. | BO Instructor Cards 8-10 Maps with marked controls and start/finish. A couple of additional maps needed to allow for swapping. Kites/markers. |

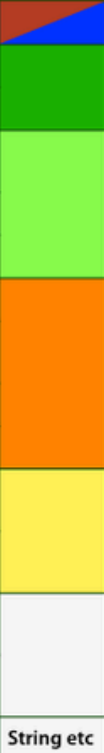
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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6-Star Exercise -> Short Loops | More challenging terrain/map | As session 5 | As session 5 | As session 5 | As session 5 Request map from local club |
| 7-Line exercise | Campus or off site | Keeping in contact with the map. Identifying features. | Steps A-D Consolidating skills learned | Steps A-D Consolidating techniques learned | BO Instructor Card 11 Map each. Control markers / kites Pens. |
| 8-Score event | Campus or off site | Fun competition testing skills learned. | Steps A-D Consolidating skills learned | Steps A-D Consolidating techniques learned | BO Instructor Card 12 Map each. Control markers / kites. Punches or control cards with pens. Watches, timing device each. |
| 9-Compass skills | Campus or simple park terrain | Learn how to use compass: A) to follow a route. B) to simplify legs by aiming off | Steps E, F Using a compass to follow route and for cutting corners. | Steps E, F Aiming off and accurate compass directions. | BO Instructor Cards 15-16 Control markers/cones. Cardinal cone maps. Compasses. Aiming off maps. |
| 10-Compass skills | More challenging terrain/map | As session 9 but more accuracy required over tougher terrain | Steps E, F, J As session 9 | Steps E, F, J As session 9 | As session 9 Request map from local club. |
| 11-Pacing | Mixed terrain and slopes | Learn how to measure distance covered over varied terrain using Pacing | Step G Understanding distances on map (scale) and on the ground | Step G Pacing for flat, uphill and downhill over different terrain | BO Instructor Card 17 Pacing cards and pens |
| 12-Attack Points | Campus or simple park terrain | Simplification by using attack points | Step G Simplification of legs | Step G Using Attack points | BO Instructor Card 18 Attack point maps. Compasses. Control markers / kites. |
| 13-Attack Points | More challenging terrain/map | As session 12 | As session 12 | As session 12 | As session 12 Request map from local club. |
| 14-Route Choice | Campus / simple terrain | Choosing good route choices between controls | Step H Identify route choices on legs | Steps H Execute leg, using best route choice for individual. | BO Instructor Card 20 |
| 15-Route Choice | More challenging terrain/map | As session 14 | As session 14 | As session 14 | As session 14 |

UNI CLUB ORIENTEERING TRAINING PROGRAMME

Appendix 1 – What to Coach – STEP System

| Level | Step | Skills | Techniques | Colour |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coach | 5 | N Long legs (1km+) | |  |
| | | M Using complex contours, Generalising contour detail | | |
| | | L Using simple contours shapes for most/all of leg | | |
| | 4 | K Using simple contour shapes over short distances on their own Or over longer distances with other information | Reading contours | |
| | | J Fine orienteering on short legs | Pacing | |
| | | I Long legs (0.6 - 1.0km) on rough compass bearing against catching features | Bearings, Collecting features | |
| Instructor | 3 | H Making simple route choices | Route choice | |
| | | G Simplification of legs with several decision points | Attack points, Absolute distance judgement e.g. '120m along' | |
| | | F Orienteering over short distances against catching features | Compass directions | |
| | | E Cutting corners | Aiming off | |
| Teaching Orienteering | 2 | D Leave a line feature to go to a visible control site & return to line feature | Catching features, Distance judgement e.g. 'halfway between' | |
| | | C Orienteer along obvious line features (handrails) Decisions at decision points without the aid of a control to identify them | Check points | |
| | 1 | B Orienteer along paths & tracks Decisions at decision points identified by control sites | Thumbing, Handrails | |
| | | A Understanding map colours and commonly used symbols Orientating the map using compass and terrain | Folding the map | |
| | Ground Level | | Understanding the map, Getting used to being independent | String etc |

Appendix 2 – How to Coach

