

The Botanical Field Skills Pyramid

Blue = ideal minimum professional level – skills are cumulative up the pyramid

Green = recorders/field surveyors with national status

7. Outstanding – good national referee for a limited taxonomic or habitat group – may write monographs, review taxonomic groups, supervise research students' projects on a species

6. Excellent ID skills – likely to be commissioned nationally for surveying a particular group. Likely to publish. Would probably keep a reference collection.

Minimum level for teaching professional ID courses.

Would be expected to record at least 75% of their taxa within a site

5. Very good ID skills – in one group or more – more-or-less totally reliable for a site survey for that group – would expect to identify any rare species or hybrids or take vouchers for ID.

Would be expected to know about legislation and automatically have appropriate licence. Always uses scientific names

Minimum level for agency employee or consultant and for NVC. Minimum level for FSC associate tutor for non-credit teaching

4. Good ID skills in one group – could be commissioned to survey a site for vascular plants but may miss sub-species and hybrids. Reasonable on grasses, sedges and ferns. Member of relevant recording society. Should automatically submit records. Should use mostly scientific names.

Ideally, schemes and societies should aim for this as the minimum for active recorders and VC recorders

Minimum level for FSC tutor. Minimum level for a recorder to have their records accepted. Phase 1 survey level

3. Reasonable ID skills – some flowering plants, some common grasses, sedges or ferns – an improver. Should be aware of relevant national recording society. May be a member. May submit records locally. Uses common names usually.

Can include the 'village expert', and may lead informal walks

2. Some ID skills – can ID common flowering species, for example but not capable of producing a comprehensive site list. No grasses, sedges or ferns, but some rushes. May have attended on courses but not familiar with collecting and refereeing of voucher specimens. Unlikely to be a member of relevant recording society although may be a member of a local recording group. Uses common names.

1. Basic ID skills – can recognize a buttercup, daisy or plantain. No grasses, sedges or ferns. May not have attended any sort of training course in identification, but intends to work/record in that area. Usually not a member of BSBI. Probably unaware that they are at this level but would like to be at one of the above levels (often a recent undergraduate).

0. General populace with no current engagement in field botany