

Data Analysis Report:

CSIA Women in Skiing (WIS) Survey 2026

Objective

The purpose of this report is to analyze the feedback from the recent CSIA Women in Skiing (WIS) Committee survey. By synthesizing these findings, policy makers and leadership can better understand the current landscape and identify actionable opportunities to improve the experience, progression, and retention of women and gender-diverse members within the organization.

1. Executive Summary

Overall, the surveyed demographic reports a generally positive experience with CSIA courses and professional development, alongside a strong desire to progress further in their certifications (61% intend to pursue additional levels). However, systemic and personal barriers—most notably financial costs, confidence levels, and a lack of structured mentorship—hinder their advancement. Strikingly, over half of the respondents (56%) reported that their personal characteristics (such as gender, age, or communication style) directly influenced their assessment and course experiences.

2. Demographic Profile

- **Sample Size:** 309 respondents.
- **Gender Identity:** 98% identify as women, with the remainder identifying as non-binary, gender diverse, or men.
- **Certification Levels:** A healthy pipeline exists, primarily concentrated in the lower levels: Level 1 (39%), Level 2 (44%), Level 3 (12%), and Level 4/Course Conductors (~4%).
- **Tenure:** The demographic represents a mix of highly experienced veterans and relative newcomers (25% have been members for 20+ years; 33% have been members for 3 years or less).

3. Key Findings

A. Certification Progression & Barriers

Despite a strong willingness to advance, members face significant hurdles.

- **High Intent to Progress:** 61% are "Very" or "Somewhat" likely to pursue additional certifications. Only 27% are unlikely to progress.
- **Top 5 Barriers to Progression:**
 1. **Financial Burden:** Course and examination costs (cited by 122 respondents).
 2. **Psychological Factors:** Personal confidence related to readiness (112 respondents).
 3. **Physical Limitations:** Physical readiness or injury considerations (85 respondents).
 4. **Logistics:** Scheduling and regional course availability (75 respondents).
 5. **Work/Life Balance:** Time away from work (73 respondents).

B. Inclusivity and the Learning Environment

While 83% of respondents described their overall experiences as "Mostly" or "Very" positive, a deeper look reveals subtle inclusivity challenges during actual courses and assessments.

- **Impact of Personal Characteristics:** 55.7% of respondents stated that their personal characteristics actively influenced their experience during courses or assessments.
- **Top Influencing Factors:** When asked what specific personal traits influenced their experience, the leading themes were **Communication Style, Age, Gender, and Confidence Level**.
- *Takeaway:* Traditional assessment and coaching environments may favor certain communication or learning styles, leaving some demographics feeling misunderstood or inherently disadvantaged.

C. Mentorship and Desired Support Systems

There is a stark gap between the desire for support and the current availability of mentorship.

- **The Mentorship Gap:** Only **9%** of respondents have access to formal mentorship. While 30% rely on informal mentorship, a significant **28% report having zero access to mentorship**, and 18% are unsure if any exists.
- **Highly Valued Interventions:** When asked what supports would be most valuable (rated "Valuable" or "Extremely Valuable"), respondents highlighted:
 - *Topic-specific training opportunities* (87%)
 - *Flexible or regionally accessible courses* (83%)
 - *Peer mentorship opportunities* (75%)

- *Mental performance or confidence-related education (71%)*

D. The Value of WIS Pro Days and Summit's

The qualitative data strongly supports that Women in Skiing (WIS) specific events—particularly the Summits and Women's Pro Days—are viewed as the most positive, impactful, and empowering experiences offered by the CSIA.

- **Biomechanical Understanding:** Members highly value female leadership (L4s and CCs) because they fundamentally understand female biomechanics and stance, whereas assessments are viewed as sometimes penalizing women for anatomical differences.
- **Psychological Safety:** These camps remove the "intimidation factor" found in standard courses. Members praise the safe, non-competitive, and highly collaborative environments that allow them to take risks and build confidence.
- *Caveat for Programming:* While members love the supportive environment, they emphasized that these events must remain focused on high-performance on-snow development, rather than shifting too far into "support groups" or off-snow wellness.

E. The Dual Impact of Course Conductors (CCs)

Over half of respondents (56%) reported that their personal characteristics (gender, age, etc.) influenced their course experience. When asked *what* influenced their experience, **"Communication style" was the number one cited factor. The Negative Impacts (Systemic Friction):** A concerning pattern emerged regarding how some evaluators communicate, particularly male CCs interacting with female candidates.

- **Intimidation and Condescension:** Members reported being unfairly targeted for corrections, spoken down to, or publicly humiliated by evaluators.
- **"Boys' Club" Culture:** Several respondents cited unprofessional environments, including sexual innuendos, inappropriate objectification, or clear biases where male candidates were treated with more leniency.
- **Lack of Feedback:** When candidates failed, communication was sometimes described as arrogant or non-existent, leaving members confused and demoralized.

F. The Positive Impacts (Catalysts for Progression):

Conversely, the data proves that exceptional communication is the primary catalyst for member progression.

- **Client-Centered Pedagogy:** CCs who prioritize a supportive, educational environment over a purely evaluative one actively reverse self-doubt and inspire members to pursue higher certifications.

- **Intentional Grouping:** Evaluators who intentionally grouped women together during standard courses immediately alleviated anxiety and created a safer space to learn.
- **Female Role Models:** The presence of female CCs builds immediate trust and provides realistic, empowering role models for candidates to emulate.

4. Recommendations for Policy Makers

To improve the progression, retention, and overall experience of this demographic, leadership should consider the following strategic actions:

1. **Develop Formal Mentorship and Peer-Support Programs:** With only 9% of members receiving formal mentorship, there is an immediate need to establish structured mentorship networks. Pairing Level 1 and 2 instructors with female/gender-diverse Level 3, 4, and Course Conductors can directly address the "confidence/readiness" barrier and create a stronger sense of community.
2. **Integrate "Mental Performance" into the Curriculum:** Because "confidence" ranks as the #2 barrier to progression—and is heavily cited as an influencing factor during assessments—CSIA should consider embedding mental performance and confidence-building modules directly into standard certification training or offering it as a highly requested standalone seminar.
3. **Evaluator and Course Conductor Training:** Since 56% of respondents feel personal traits (like gender, age, and communication style) impact their course experience, Course Conductors should receive targeted training on unconscious bias, inclusive pedagogy, constructive feedback delivery, and adapting teaching styles to a wider range of diverse learner needs. Assessors must ensure that candidates are graded purely on technical merit rather than dominant/extroverted communication styles. Course Conductors should be trained to recognize communication styles that unintentionally hinder candidate progress, and be equipped with high-performance communication strategies.
4. **Modernize Course Delivery and Accessibility:** Financial costs and rigid scheduling are the biggest logistical barriers. Policy makers should explore moving theory to low-cost asynchronous eLearning, offering more localized "regional" training days to minimize travel requirements, and increasing the awareness of available bursaries or scholarships to help offset costs.

How This Report Was Created

The original data containing personal information was only viewed on a secure, local computer and was never uploaded to the internet. Once all personal details were removed, the original files were permanently erased. We then used a secure, private AI tool to analyze the anonymized data, and the author personally reviewed the final report to guarantee its accuracy.