

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Exercise Practitioner 1 (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J6E9 47
SCQF level: 7 (24 SCQF credit points)
Valid from: session 2024 to 2025

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 3.0) March 2024

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop a broad understanding of the basic principles and practices of being an exercise practitioner, leading group and individual exercise sessions in different environments. Learners deliver gym exercise inductions to an individual and a small group, deliver an eight-week exercise programme, and a group exercise session. They learn how to evaluate the sessions delivered and how to adapt a session for specialised groups (young people aged 13 to 18; older adults; and antenatal and postnatal clients). They must be able to recognise health and safety in the exercise environment, including how to conduct risk assessments, and the importance of cleaning. Emergency evacuation procedures and health and safety laws and regulations should also be included in the unit. Learners understand meta-skills and how to develop their own in a vocational context.

Entry requirements and progression routes

Entry to this unit is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend that learners have some experience of participation in a gym or fitness environment. We recommend that learners who are taking the unit have communication skills at a minimum of SCQF level 5 or an equivalent level.

You should deliver the unit as a stand-alone unit or with the following mandatory units:

- ◆ Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Training Principles for Exercise (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Preparation to Working in the Physical Activity and Health Industry (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition (SCQF level 7)

The unit is a part of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Physical Activity and Health. Learners can progress from this group award to:

- ◆ Higher National Diploma (HND) in Physical Activity and Health (Year 2) at SCQF level 8
- ◆ local agreements for advanced entry into university degree programmes

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 recognise the importance of health and safety in an exercise environment
- 2 deliver a gym-based induction for an individual and a small group
- 3 deliver an eight-week gym-based exercise programme for a healthy individual
- 4 deliver a group exercise session for a small group of similar ability level
- 5 explain how to adapt an exercise session for one of the specialist population groups
- 6 evaluate the gym-based exercise inductions for the individual and group, the eight-week gym-based training exercise programme and the group exercise session
- 7 develop sustainability knowledge and understanding, and skills to support clients in the physical activity and health sector

Evidence requirements

Learners can generate evidence in the form of stand-alone assignments, oral questioning or as part of an overall unit project. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education. The standard of evidence should be consistent with the SCQF level of this unit.

Recognise the importance of health and safety in an exercise environment (outcome 1)

Learners must generate evidence in the form of a stand-alone assignment, oral questioning or as part of an overall unit project.

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must provide the following evidence:

- ◆ Carry out a risk assessment for a minimum of two different exercise environments. Identify hazards and document these in a risk assessment detailing a minimum of six relevant hazards.
- ◆ Describe the importance of cleaning, the range of cleaning methods and the variety of equipment and surfaces that must be cleaned.
- ◆ Explain why emergency evacuation procedures are in place for a workplace and provide examples for a minimum of two different client groups, and describe how they may be evacuated.
- ◆ Describe the purpose of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HASAWA); Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR); Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH); and the importance of manual handling training.
- ◆ Describe the purpose of storage plans and how to create a storage plan for an environment and/or facility.
- ◆ Explain the health and safety implications of assembling, dismantling, hygiene and storage of equipment.

- ◆ Describe manufacturers' equipment guidelines and where to find them in a chosen facility.
- ◆ Explain the importance of manual handling training for an exercise practitioner.

Deliver a gym-based induction for an individual and a small group (outcome 2)

You should assess in a formative and summative manner. All criteria should be covered across the individual and group induction. Each session should be for a minimum of 30 minutes.

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must deliver a gym-based exercise induction to both an individual and a small group using exercises from their exercise library. Verbal screening should be carried out before the induction sessions. Learners must cover the following across the two inductions:

Formative assessment — conducted with a small group of a minimum of three and maximum of five people

- ◆ 1 × cardiovascular warm-up
- ◆ 1 × cardiovascular cool-down
- ◆ 1 × dynamic warm-up stretch
- ◆ 1 × static passive cool-down stretch
- ◆ 1 × fixed weight exercise
- ◆ 1 × body weight exercise
- ◆ 1 × free weight exercise

Summative assessment — conducted with an individual client

- ◆ 1 × cardiovascular training main session using fartlek, interval and/or continuous
- ◆ 2 × free weight exercises
- ◆ 2 × fixed weight exercises
- ◆ 1 × functional exercise using small equipment
- ◆ 1 × static active stretch
- ◆ 1 × proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) stretch

Learners should plan the warm-up, main cardiovascular training and cool-down on different cardiovascular machines. Free weights across both the summative and formative assessments must include at least one dumbbell and one barbell exercise. Functional exercises involve movement patterns, muscle actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life.

Learners must include the following:

- ◆ Use explanations and demonstrations that are technically correct, safe and appropriate to the individual client.
- ◆ Observe the client's movement, correcting exercise technique to ensure safe and effective alignment, execution and use of equipment.
- ◆ Provide client-specific instruction, feedback, encouragement and reinforcement in a friendly, professional manner.
- ◆ Demonstrate spotting as part of the free weight observation.
- ◆ Include free weight exercises using one dumbbell, one barbell and an exercise using a bench.
- ◆ Offer adaptations and alternatives that meet a client's individual needs while improving performance:
 - progression
 - regression
 - corrective strategies
 - alternative exercises, as required
- ◆ Adopt appropriate positions to observe clients and respond to their needs.
- ◆ Monitor the safety and intensity of exercise.
- ◆ Apply frequency, intensity, time and type (FITT) principles to ensure progression according to individual needs.

You should assess learners on their client rapport, session management, teaching skills, and observation and feedback skills. Wherever possible, learners should teach 'real' clients, as opposed to their peers.

Deliver an eight-week gym-based exercise programme for a healthy individual (outcome 3)

You must assess learners delivering one of the planned sessions from their eight-week gym-based exercise programme. This session should be for a minimum of 30 minutes.

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must deliver a safe and effective eight-week programme, for a minimum of one session per week.

Learners must include the following:

- ◆ Use explanations and demonstrations that are technically correct, safe and appropriate to the individual client.
- ◆ Observe clients' movement, correcting exercise technique to ensure safe and effective alignment, execution and use of equipment.
- ◆ Provide client-specific instructing points, feedback, encouragement and reinforcement in a friendly, professional manner.

- ◆ Offer adaptations and alternatives that meet a client's individual needs while improving performance:
 - progression
 - regression
 - corrective strategies
 - alternative exercises as required
- ◆ Adopt appropriate positions to observe clients and respond to their needs.
- ◆ Monitor the safety and intensity of exercise.
- ◆ Manipulate frequency, intensity, time and type (FITT) principles to ensure progression according to individual needs.

Learners should carry out the following, keeping a log over the eight weeks:

- ◆ Monitor and review the effectiveness of the gym-based exercise programme.
- ◆ Carry out regular programme review meetings with clients to ascertain how well the exercise programme met client needs and progress towards goals, and any improvements that can be made to the programme plan.
- ◆ Evaluate and reflect on planned programmes to ensure the physical and psychological needs of the individual are being met.
- ◆ Signpost clients to other aspects of the facility if they show an interest in other areas or activities.
- ◆ Walk the gym floor, demonstrating ability to effectively interact and support different clients:
 - use of effective communication skills
 - rapport-building
 - technique advice
 - correction

This list is not exhaustive

Deliver a group exercise session for a small group of similar ability level (outcome 4)

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must be assessed delivering one of their planned group training sessions. This session should be observed for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Learners must demonstrate safe and effective technique to cover a minimum of one of each of the following:

- ◆ 1 × progressive warm-up component
- ◆ 1 × cardiovascular exercise
- ◆ 1 × body weight exercise
- ◆ 1 × exercise using small equipment
- ◆ 1 × functional exercise using functional equipment

- ◆ 1 × flexibility exercise
- ◆ 1 × range of motion exercise: static stretching and mobilisation of joints
- ◆ 1 × regressive cool-down component

Functional exercises involve movement patterns, muscle actions, and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life. Small equipment can be mats, hand weights, weighted medicine balls, kettlebells, resistance bands, plyometric box, and battle ropes — this list is not exhaustive.

Learners must deliver group training exercise sessions and programmes:

- ◆ Select appropriate equipment for the specific activity area and session type.
- ◆ Organise own work duties alongside colleagues and participants to ensure that activity areas are ready for use and that all relevant equipment is set up, dismantled and stored safely.
- ◆ Inspire participants, injecting personality and a degree of showpersonship to every session.

Learners must deliver safe and effective group training exercise sessions and programmes by the following:

- ◆ Conduct a verbal screening prior to exercise and act on feedback in an appropriate manner.
- ◆ Demonstrate safe and effective warm-up and cool-down components.
- ◆ Effectively interact and support participants, for example in the use of effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills, rapport-building, technique advice and correction.
- ◆ Use explanations and demonstrations that are technically correct, safe and appropriate to the individual client and the group as a whole.
- ◆ Check participant understanding, correcting exercise technique to ensure safe and effective alignment and use of equipment.
- ◆ Provide client-specific instructing points, feedback, encouragement and reinforcement in a friendly, professional manner.
- ◆ Offer adaptations and alternatives that meet a client's individual needs and circumstances:
 - progression
 - regression
 - corrective strategies
 - alternative exercises, as required
- ◆ Adopt appropriate positions to observe participants and respond to their needs.
- ◆ Monitor the safety and intensity of exercise.
- ◆ Demonstrate realistic timings and sequences during the session and manage overall session timings.
- ◆ Demonstrate effective coaching, teaching and instructing methods, for example to cater for different learning styles, tailoring instructing styles and communication methods to individual needs.

- ◆ Be available to participants immediately before and after the allotted session time.

Explain how to adapt an exercise session for one of the specialist population groups (outcome 5)

Learners must generate evidence in a stand-alone assignment, oral questioning or as part of an overall unit project.

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must provide the following evidence:

Explain how to adapt an exercise session for one of the following specialist population groups:

- ◆ young people (aged 13 to 18)
- ◆ antenatal and postnatal clients
- ◆ older adults (aged 50 plus)

This should include current physical activity guidelines for health, for example guidelines from the UK chief medical officer (CMO). Learners should explain how the exercise session should be adapted for the group chosen and how to apply specific exercise considerations using current research.

Evaluate the gym-based exercise inductions for the individual and group, the eight-week gym-based training exercise programme and the group exercise session (outcome 6)

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must generate evidence in a stand-alone assignment, oral questioning or as part of an overall unit project.

Learners must ensure they keep a logbook, including the following:

- ◆ evaluate each session delivered, including the:
 - individual and group gym-based exercise induction session
 - eight-week gym-based exercise programme
 - group exercise session
- ◆ appraise own performance in relation to the sessions
- ◆ appraise participants' performance in relation to the sessions
- ◆ assess the appropriateness of the session content in relation to the user group and environment
- ◆ propose changes or adaptations to the session based on the appraisal of own performance, participant performance and appropriateness of session content
- ◆ methods of obtaining client feedback, the feedback cycle and impact of role on client experience
- ◆ a range of feedback from the client, assessor or placement supervisor or mentor on the content structure and effectiveness of the sessions. Explain how this helps inform and develop practice

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- ◆ include strategies used with clients for motivation, monitoring exercise intensity, exercise adherence and maintenance
- ◆ explain the importance of being covered by appropriate insurance, including employers' liability and professional indemnity
- ◆ explain the current music licence requirements for a group exercise instructor

Develop sustainability knowledge and understanding, and skills to support clients in the physical activity and health sector (outcome 7)

Learners must successfully:

- ◆ identify and describe sustainability in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- ◆ explain how one product or process relevant to physical activity and health could be made more sustainable and help meet the aims of at least two selected SDGs

There is potential for the outcome to be linked with meta-skills development for self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

See the Educator Guide for more information.

Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the principle uses and suitability of a range of cleaning substances relevant to the gym environment, for example an anti-bacterial spray ◆ the principle uses and suitability of a range of cleaning equipment, for example mop and paper towels ◆ standard operating procedures with regards to routine maintenance and cleaning, adhering to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — manufacturers’ guidelines and where to find them — COSHH — manual handling techniques and the requirements within their role — electrical safety and security — safe storage of equipment and how to create a storage plan ◆ health and safety at work, disclosure and barring service (DBS), safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, equality and diversity, personal liability insurance ◆ the health and safety implications of assembling, dismantling, hygiene and storage of equipment ◆ COSHH, reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations, electricity at work regulations, first aid regulations ◆ how to use personal protective equipment (PPE), carry out risk assessments and emergency action plans 	<p>Outcome 1 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrate suitable use of appropriate cleaning substances and equipment in line with the organisation’s safe systems of work, cleaning schedules and organisational standards, while maintaining the safety of themselves and others ◆ plan and prepare own cleaning activities through the interpretation of the organisation’s daily cleaning schedule ◆ demonstrate appropriate action to deal with identified hazards, including appropriate use of signage and reporting procedures ◆ demonstrate effective communication to clients and colleagues while cleaning to ensure a positive client experience ◆ ensure all relevant legislation, policies and procedures are adhered to and that local escalation procedures are followed in a timely manner in the event of a safeguarding or health and safety concern

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1 (continued) Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ how to identify hazards relating to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— activity areas and gym— people— physical risks◆ risk assessments and reporting procedures◆ how to carry out risk assessments◆ the different types of waste, for example hazardous and non-hazardous and how to dispose of it, in line with the organisation's environmental policy◆ legislative, regulatory and health and safety requirements◆ how to ensure a safe environment when working with clients, with knowledge of relevant risk assessment and management of the space and activity, including first aid procedures	

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 2 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to deliver safe and effective gym-based exercise induction programmes for individuals and groups in the scope of practice ◆ how to instruct clients on a range of exercises for gym and group-based exercise programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — cardiovascular machines: upright cycle, recumbent cycle, rower, elliptical trainer or cross trainer, treadmill — fixed resistance equipment including cable machines — free weight exercises: dumbbell, barbell, bench, floor, rack — body weight exercises: squat, lunge, press-up, tricep dip, pull-up — dynamic maintenance stretches and static developmental stretches: static active, static passive, dynamic, PNF — functional exercises — considerations for training clients in a range of different environments: gym, fitness studio, outdoor space — how wearable technology can be used to support safe and effective gym-based exercise — understand name, area, muscle, silent demonstration explain (NAMSET), rate of perceived exertion (RPE), scales, push-pull (non-prescriptive), balance muscle groups 	<p>Outcome 2 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ screen clients ◆ deliver a gym-based exercise induction programme that includes a variety of fitness components, exercises, training methods ◆ instruct clients in a range of physical activity exercises ◆ demonstrate safe and effective technique to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — warm-up — cardiovascular machines — body weight exercises — machine weights: for example, range of motion, rate, joint alignment — free weights: lifting, passing and spotting technique — small equipment: for example, use of mats for core and abdominal exercise — functional exercise and functional equipment: exercises that address the movement patterns, muscle actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life — flexibility and range of motion exercise: static stretching and mobilisation of joints — cool-down

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 2 (continued) Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to provide safe and effective exercise demonstrations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — effective coaching, teaching or instructing methods to cater for different learning styles, tailoring instructing styles or communication methods to individual needs ◆ how to induct clients in the gym environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — policies and procedures in and around the gym or facility relevant to own role — facility walkthrough and show round: for example, gym floor, class and spin studios, cardiovascular machines, resistance equipment (machine and free weights) — how to adapt inductions for individuals and small groups with a minimum of three people to maintain effectiveness 	<p>Outcome 2 (continued) Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrate effective coaching, teaching or instructing methods to cater for different learning styles, tailoring instructing styles or communication methods to individual needs ◆ ensure clients understand how to continue their programme of gym-based exercise without direct supervision ◆ assess a client’s readiness to exercise and the need for signposting or referral to other relevant professionals ◆ conduct safe and effective consultations, assessments, gym inductions and reviews with clients ◆ adapt inductions for individuals and small groups, with a minimum of three people to maintain effectiveness ◆ provide a ‘client experience’ during consultations, assessments and gym inductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — engage and build rapport with clients with varying needs — show empathy — give positive, motivating, timely and relevant feedback to clients — be accountable and take responsibility for clients — use effective communication methods to ascertain a client’s needs and enhance the client experience — signpost clients to other areas of the facility if they show an interest in other activities or services provided by the organisation

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 2 (continued) Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to observe and monitor gym clients to maintain safety and effectiveness of exercise at all times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — how to approach clients in a friendly, non-threatening manner — how to work with clients to effectively improve exercise technique — how to adapt, regress, progress and apply corrective strategies as required — how to modify and adapt exercises for a range of individual needs: offering alternatives that regress or progress an exercise — alternative activities and or exercise options — awareness of health and safety considerations: for example, manual handling — manufacturer guidelines, equipment maintenance and servicing — individual client abilities — how wearable technology can be used to support safe and effective gym-based exercise — how to adopt appropriate positions to observe clients and respond to their needs — how to monitor the safety and intensity of exercise — how to provide feedback and instructing points which are timely, clear and motivational 	<p>Outcome 2 (continued) Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ observe, monitor and engage with clients to ensure safety and effectiveness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — using explanations and demonstrations that are technically correct, safe and appropriate to the individual client — observing clients' movement, correcting exercise technique to ensure safe and effective alignment, execution and use of equipment — providing client-specific instructing points, feedback, encouragement and reinforcement in a friendly, professional manner — offering adaptations and alternatives that meet a client's individual needs while improving performance: progression, regression, corrective strategies and alternative exercises as required — adopting appropriate positions to observe clients and respond to their needs — monitoring the safety and intensity of exercise — manipulating FITT principles to ensure progression according to individual needs
<p>Outcome 3 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to deliver, monitor and review a safe and effective gym-based eight-week exercise programme for an individual in the scope of practice 	<p>Outcome 3 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ deliver, monitor and review an eight-week gym-based exercise programme that include a variety of fitness components, exercises and training methods

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 3 (continued) Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to observe and monitor gym clients to maintain safety and effectiveness of exercise at all times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — how to approach clients in a friendly, non-threatening manner — how to work with clients to effectively improve exercise technique — how to adapt, regress, progress and apply corrective strategies as required — how to modify and adapt exercises for a range of individual needs: offering alternatives that regress or progress an exercise — alternative activities and or exercise options — awareness of health and safety considerations: for example, manual handling — manufacturer guidelines, equipment maintenance and servicing — individual client abilities — how wearable technology can be used to support safe and effective gym-based exercise — how to adopt appropriate positions to observe clients and respond to their needs — how to monitor the safety and intensity of exercise — how to provide feedback and instructing points which are timely, clear and motivational 	<p>Outcome 3 (continued) Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ observe, monitor and engage with clients to ensure safety and effectiveness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — using explanations and demonstrations that are technically correct, safe and appropriate to the individual client — observing clients' movement, correcting exercise technique to ensure safe and effective alignment, execution and use of equipment — providing client-specific instructing points, feedback, encouragement and reinforcement in a friendly, professional manner — offering adaptations and alternatives that meet a client's individual needs while improving performance: progression, regression, corrective strategies and alternative exercises as required — adopting appropriate positions to observe clients and respond to their needs — monitoring the safety and intensity of exercise — manipulating FITT principles to ensure progression according to individual needs ◆ monitor and review the effectiveness of the gym-based exercise programme ◆ carry out regular programme review meetings with clients to ascertain how well the exercise programme met client needs and/or progress towards goals, and any improvements that can be made to the programme plan, for example.

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 3 (continued) Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a range of gym-based exercise training methods to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — cardiovascular exercise: fartlek, interval, continuous — resistance exercise: single set training, circuit resistance training, basic sets, DeLorme and Watkins 10 RM system, Berger 6 RM system, super-sets — functional exercise and functional equipment: movement patterns, muscle actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life — flexibility and range of motion exercise: static stretching and mobilisation of joints ◆ how to monitor and review safe and effective gym-based exercise programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — reasons for temporary deferral of exercise and pathways of referral, such as GP, exercise level 3 specialist, for example — importance of verbal screening and how to conduct it — benefits and limitations of different methods of monitoring exercise intensity: the talk test, rate of perceived exertion (RPE), heart rate monitoring and the use of different heart rate zones and how to apply these — methods of evaluating how well gym-based exercise programmes are meeting client needs — when to proactively engage with clients and when not to: for example, timing interactions appropriately or avoiding poorly timed interactions which can disrupt training and/or focus 	<p>Outcome 3 (continued) Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ signpost clients to other aspects of the facility if they show an interest in other areas or activities ◆ evaluate and reflect on planned programmes to ensure the physical and psychological needs of the individual are being met ◆ walk the gym floor demonstrating ability to effectively interact and support different clients: for example, use of effective communication skills, rapport-building, technique advice and correction ◆ appraise own performance in relation to the session ◆ appraise participants' performance in relation to the session ◆ assess the appropriateness of the session content in relation to the user group and environment ◆ propose changes or adaptations to the session based on the appraisal of own performance, participant performance and appropriateness of session content

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 4 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to deliver a safe and effective group exercise-based session in the scope of practice ◆ a range of group exercise training methods to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — cardiovascular exercise: fartlek, interval, continuous — resistance exercise: body weight exercise, use of small equipment — functional exercise and functional equipment: movement patterns, muscle actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life — flexibility and range of motion exercise: static stretching and mobilisation of joints ◆ safe and effective techniques for a range of group exercises to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — cardiovascular exercise — body weight exercise — small equipment: for example, use of mats for core and abdominal exercise — functional exercise: exercises that address the movement patterns, muscle actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life — flexibility and range of motion exercise: static stretching and mobilisation of joints ◆ how to safely prepare activity areas for use and how to safely set up, dismantle and store equipment ◆ how to deliver planned group exercise sessions ◆ how to provide safe and effective exercise demonstrations 	<p>Outcome 4 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrate safe and effective technique to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — warm-up — cardiovascular exercise — body weight exercise — small equipment: for example, use of mats for core and abdominal exercise — functional exercise and functional equipment: exercises that address the movement patterns, muscle actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life — flexibility and range of motion exercise: static stretching and mobilisation of joints — cool-down ◆ carry out relevant risk assessments, showing appropriate safety considerations for the environment ◆ select appropriate equipment for the specific activity area and session type ◆ organise own work duties alongside colleagues and participants to ensure that activity areas are ready for use and that all relevant equipment is set up, dismantled and stored safely ◆ inspire participants, injecting personality and a degree of showpersonship to each and every session ◆ deliver safe and effective group exercise sessions and programmes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — conducting a verbal screening prior to exercise and acting on feedback in an appropriate manner — demonstrating safe and effective warm-up and cool-down components

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 4 (continued) Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to provide safe and effective demonstrations of a range of available equipment to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — cardiovascular exercise — body weight exercise — small equipment: for example, use of mats for core and abdominal exercise — functional exercise: for example, exercises that address the movement patterns, muscle actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life — flexibility and range of motion exercise: static stretching and mobilisation of joints — effective coaching, teaching or instructing methods: for example, to cater for different learning styles, tailoring instructing styles or communication methods to individual needs ◆ how to observe and monitor group exercise clients to maintain safety and effectiveness of exercise at all times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — reasons for temporary deferral of exercise and pathways of referral such as GP, exercise level 3 specialist, etc — how to approach clients in a friendly, non-threatening manner — how to work with clients to effectively improve exercise technique — how to adapt, regress, progress and apply corrective strategies as required — how to modify and adapt exercises for a range of individual needs: offering alternatives that regress or progress an exercise 	<p>Outcome 4 (continued) Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — effectively interact and support participants: for example, use of effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills, rapport-building, technique advice and correction — use explanations and demonstrations that are technically correct, safe and appropriate to the individual client and the group as a whole — check participant understanding, correcting exercise technique to ensure safe and effective alignment and use of equipment — provide client-specific instructing points, feedback, encouragement and reinforcement in a friendly, professional manner — offer adaptations and alternatives that meet a client’s individual needs and circumstances: progression, regression, corrective strategies and alternative exercises, as required — adopt appropriate positions to observe participants and respond to their needs — monitor the safety and intensity of exercise — demonstrate realistic timings and sequences during the session and manage overall session timings — demonstrate effective coaching, teaching or instructing methods: for example, to cater for different learning styles, tailoring instructing styles or communication methods to individual needs — be available to participants immediately before and after the allotted session time

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 4 (continued) Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to observe and monitor group exercise clients to maintain safety and effectiveness of exercise at all times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — health and safety considerations: for example, manual handling — manufacturer guidelines, equipment maintenance and servicing — individual client abilities — how to adopt appropriate positions to observe clients and respond to their needs — how to monitor the safety and intensity of exercise and choose the most appropriate method of monitoring exercise — how to provide feedback and instructing points which are timely, clear and motivational 	
<p>Outcome 5 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to adapt exercise sessions for a special population group using the current guidelines in the scope of practice ◆ the current physical activity guidelines for young people (aged 13 to 18), older adults (aged 50 plus) and prenatal and postnatal clients ◆ the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) national recommendations for physical activity in adults, older adults and pregnant women ◆ how to adapt exercise sessions for special population groups ◆ exercise considerations for special population group 	<p>Outcome 5 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ adapt either the gym or group exercise sessions for one of the following groups using current guidelines: young people (aged 13 to 18), older adults (aged 50 plus) and prenatal and postnatal clients, using current research ◆ explain how the session could be adapted for the group chosen, and specific exercise considerations for the group chosen using current research

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 6 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to evaluate gym- and group-based exercise sessions and personal teaching performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — monitor and review safe and effective gym-based exercise programmes — reasons for temporary deferral of exercise — importance of verbal screening and how to conduct it — benefits and limitations of different methods of monitoring exercise intensity: the talk test, RPE, heart rate monitoring and the use of different heart rate zones — methods of evaluating how well gym-based exercise programmes are meeting client needs — when to proactively engage with clients and when not to: for example, timing interactions appropriately or avoiding poorly timed interactions which can disrupt training and focus 	<p>Outcome 6 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ gather a range of feedback from different people, clients, mentors or assessors on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — the individual and the group gym-based exercise induction — the eight-week gym-based exercise programme — the group exercise session — appraising own performance in relation to the sessions — appraising participants' performance in relation to the sessions — assessing the appropriateness of the session content in relation to the user group and environment — proposing changes or adaptations to the session based on the appraisal of own performance, participant performance and appropriateness of session content — explain the importance of being covered by appropriate insurance, including employers' liability and professional indemnity and the current music licence requirements for a group exercise instructor
<p>Outcome 7 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ sustainability and the SDGs ◆ subject-specific sustainability issues and how these relate to the SDGs, and potential improvements 	<p>Outcome 7 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ review SDGs and assess own knowledge and understanding ◆ review unit content against the SDGs to identify a sustainability-related issue ◆ apply knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs to propose improvement

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the physical activity and health sector.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: sorting information for client programmes; focusing on the client's needs; adapting sessions in outcomes 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6
- ◆ integrity: understanding ethics; being aware of acting on values and principles; work ethic; timekeeping; reliability; discipline; trustworthiness when working with clients in outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ adapting: adapting teaching styles; decision-making; being responsible; responding to changes when working with clients in outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ initiative: decision making; independent thinking; self-belief; motivation; responsibility when risk assessing in outcome 2 and when working with clients in outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 5; evaluating sessions in outcome 6 and working on their own to source information for sustainable development in outcome 7

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating: receiving information from clients; giving information; listening to others when working with clients in outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ feeling: sense of responsibility; empathy; understanding how others feel when working with clients in outcomes 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ collaborating: operating in different settings; building relationships with clients; working towards shared goals; and team-working with other professionals when working with clients in outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 5 and working with others to agree a common approach in outcome 7
- ◆ leading: inspiring and motivating others; influencing others and being a role model; developing others when working with clients in outcomes 3, 4 and 5

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: noticing significant information; asking questions; information sourcing; problem recognition; evaluating sessions in outcome 6 and 7
- ◆ creativity: creating enjoyable programmes and sessions for clients; responding to different situations and adapting; coming up with solutions to problems when working with clients in outcomes 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7
- ◆ sense-making: analysing client information; analysing clients programme data; making sense of constant changes when working with clients in outcomes 3, 4 and 5; evaluating sessions in outcome 6 and 7

NextGen: HN published prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 3.0)
March 2024

- ◆ critical thinking: problem solving; evaluating sessions; responding to problems and changing environments; assessing risk and creating risk assessments in outcome 1, and when working with clients in outcomes 3, 4, 5 and 7

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory unit in the HNC in Physical Activity and Health.

The notional design length is 120 hours, however, the amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your centre's discretion.

This unit can be delivered as a stand-alone unit or with the following mandatory units:

- ◆ Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Training Principles for Exercise (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition (SCQF level 7)

We recommend that you integrate unit delivery of Exercise Practitioner 1 at SCQF level 7 and the Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7. Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7 includes screening and planning and can be used as a basis for the unit, with learner evidence forming a portfolio or e-portfolio.

The Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7 unit covers:

- ◆ training principles
- ◆ consultation with clients
- ◆ health and fitness testing
- ◆ planning and applying the training principles in the development of both individual and group training
- ◆ planning sessions
- ◆ creating an exercise library

We recommend that this forms the basis of this unit, where learners deliver the sessions they have planned in the exercise library.

There are opportunities for cross assessment and holistic assessment across the mandatory units in the HNC in Physical Activity and Health. Centres should refer to the Next Generation Higher National Educator Guide for guidance and support notes.

Opportunities for e-assessment

Assessment that is supported by information and communication technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software, may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit.

If you want to use e-assessment, you must ensure that you apply the national standard to all evidence and that conditions of assessment (as provided in the 'Evidence requirements' section) are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence.

Professional recognition

Learners completing the HNC in Physical Activity and Health can become a member of the Chartered Institute of Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) as a gym instructor practitioner, group exercise instructor practitioner and health navigator.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

The unit provides learners with knowledge and practical skills to deliver gym-based exercise inductions for individuals and groups, gym-based exercise programmes and group exercise sessions. Learners can recognise the importance of health and safety in an exercise environment and develop meta-skills in a vocational context. The unit should emphasise both the importance of theoretical knowledge and applied practical skills in relation to delivery of sessions and evaluating own practice.

Resources required include:

- ◆ access to a gym with a range of cardiovascular machines
- ◆ a range of fixed and free weights and cable machines
- ◆ small gym equipment such as mats, medicine balls, and skipping ropes
- ◆ a suitable space to deliver the group exercise sessions, such as a fitness studio, hall or outdoor space

The unit has seven outcomes with a variety of different evidence-gathering methods:

- ◆ experiential participation
- ◆ practical instruction
- ◆ delivery of gym and group exercise programmes and evaluations of sessions delivered

The evidence forms part of a project and learners collate this in a portfolio or an e-portfolio. Practical delivery requires you to record evidence by using formative and summative observation checklists. See further guidance on assessment in each outcome.

Approaches to assessment

The grading model enables subject teams to judge learners' performances holistically across the key aspects of the qualification, and to decide on an overall qualification grade.

You assess learners against selected criteria that reflect course performance and allow you to apply an appropriate grade on performance.

You should deliver the unit as a stand-alone unit or with the following units:

- ◆ Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Training Principles for Exercise (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Preparation to work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition (SCQF level 7)

The unit is a part of the HNC in Physical Activity and Health. Learners can progress from this group award to:

- ◆ Higher National Diploma (HND) Physical Activity and Health (Year 2) at SCQF level 8
- ◆ local agreements for advanced entry into university degree programmes

Recognise the importance of health and safety in an exercise environment (outcome 1)

Learners must recognise the importance of health and safety in an exercise environment.

They can generate evidence in the form of a stand-alone assignment, oral questioning or as part of an overall unit project.

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must provide the following evidence:

- ◆ Carry out a risk assessment for a minimum of two different exercise environments. The environments will relate to where exercise sessions will take place for outcomes 3, 4 and 5, such as a gym, studio or outdoor area.
- ◆ Recognise hazards and document these in a risk assessment, detailing at least six relevant hazards for each environment. These hazards must relate to the environment that the exercise sessions will take place.
- ◆ Describe the importance of cleaning, the range of cleaning methods and the variety of equipment and surfaces that have to be cleaned. These should relate to the exercise sessions that are being delivered and could include a copy of the organisation's cleaning schedule, if applicable.
- ◆ Explain why emergency evacuation procedures are in place for a workplace and provide examples for a minimum of how two different clients may be evacuated. This should relate to the environment in which the exercise sessions will take place.
- ◆ Describe the purpose of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc (HASAWA); Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR); Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH); and the importance of manual handling training. Learners could describe this, for example, by completing a worksheet, writing a minimum 500-word report or delivering a presentation.
- ◆ Describe the purpose of storage plans and how to create a storage plan for an environment and/or facility. Learners could create a storage plan in relation to either a gym, dance and/or fitness studio, or a multi-purpose fitness area.
- ◆ Explain the health and safety implications of assembling, dismantling, hygiene and storage of equipment. This could be completed using scenario-based questions or as a research task in a chosen facility.
- ◆ Describe manufacturers' equipment guidelines and where to find them within a chosen facility. This could be completed using scenario-based questions or as a research task in a chosen facility.
- ◆ Explain the importance of manual handling training for an exercise practitioner. Learners could produce answers to restricted response or scenario-based questions.

Learners can include the evidence in their portfolios.

Deliver a gym-based induction for an individual and a small group (outcome 2)

Learners must deliver a gym-based exercise induction to both an individual and a small group of a minimum of three participants, using exercises from their exercise library. The exercise library from outcome 3 in the Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7 unit could be used. You should assess for a minimum of 30 minutes per session using a formative and a summative observation checklist. We recommend that one assessment is used for the small group induction and one for the individual gym induction — for example the group induction as a formative assessment and the individual induction as a summative assessment. Centres must demonstrate which parts you have assessed formatively and summatively in learners' observation checklists. You can assess the practical sessions through a live observation or a recorded submission. Learners can include the evidence in their portfolios.

Learners must instruct clients on safe and effective use of:

- ◆ cardiovascular machines, using a minimum of three different machines
- ◆ fixed weight exercises and free weight exercises, using a minimum of three for each
- ◆ one body weight exercise and one functional exercise, covering a range of movement patterns
- ◆ applying safe and effective technique for:
 - static active
 - static passive
 - dynamic and PNF stretches using a minimum one of each
- ◆ functional exercise and functional equipment:
 - movement patterns
 - muscle and joint actions and components of fitness required for activities used in daily life

The following exercises are examples that could be used in the inductions and programmes. This is not an exhaustive list:

- ◆ fixed weight: seated chest press (neutral grip); low pulley row (neutral grip); shoulder press; lat pulldown; bench press; seated chest press (overhand grip); pec dec; seated row (overhand grip); tricep pushdown (high pulley); tricep press; bicep curl (low pulley); seated bicep curl; abdominal curl; leg press; total hip; seated adductor; seated abductor; seated knee extension; leg press; lying thigh curl; seated thigh curl
- ◆ free weight: dumbbell front raise; single arm row; dumbbell bent arm pullover; behind neck press (olympic bar); shoulder press (dumbbell); lateral raise (dumbbell); olympic bar upright row; chin-ups; olympic bar bench press; chest press (dumbbell); dumbbell flies; dumbbell prone flye; supine tricep press (bar); single arm tricep press (dumbbell); bar curl; seated dumbbell curls; abdominal curl; back squat (olympic bar); dead lift (olympic bar); clean (olympic bar); snatch (olympic bar); hip hinge (olympic bar)
- ◆ cardiovascular: upright cycle; recumbent cycle; treadmill; stepper; rowing machine; elliptical trainer; cross trainer
- ◆ body weight exercises: press-up; pull-up; abdominal curl; tricep dip; plank; back extension; lunge; lateral lunge; reverse lunge; squat; hip hinge; Russian twists

- ◆ functional training exercises: jumping; lunging onto box; lateral bounds; balance exercises; bear crawls; push-up rotation; jumping lunge; wood choppers
- ◆ flexibility and mobility exercises:
 - dynamic stretches and mobility: walking lunges; leg swings; open and close gates; open and close chest; arm circles; shoulder circles; calf pumps; neck rolls
 - static stretches, active and passive: standing or seated hamstring stretch; standing or lying quadricep stretch; standing calf stretch
 - PNF: lying hamstring PNF stretch; deltoid PNF stretch; lying quadricep PNF stretch; pectoralis major PNF stretch

Deliver an eight-week gym-based exercise programme for a healthy individual (outcome 3)

Learners must deliver an eight-week gym-based exercise programme for a minimum of one session per week, using exercises from their exercise library. The exercise library from outcome 3 in the Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7 unit could be used. They must monitor and review each session and keep a log. Learners must deliver the eight weeks gym-based exercise programme to their client. You observe them delivering one of their sessions for a minimum of 30 minutes. You should assess using a summative observation checklist while observing them delivering the session. The practical sessions can be assessed through a live observation or a recorded submission.

Learners can include the evidence in their portfolios.

Deliver a group exercise session for a small group of similar ability level (outcome 4)

Learners must demonstrate effective delivery of one of their planned group exercise-based sessions. The plans should be from their exercise library, and the exercise library from outcome 3 in the Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7 unit could be used. They should teach a warm-up, main session and a cool-down. The exercise library should have two planned sessions in two different environments, but learners are only required to deliver one of these sessions for outcome 5.

Examples of the types of group exercise-based sessions learners might deliver include:

- ◆ circuits
- ◆ body conditioning classes using body weight or small equipment
- ◆ high intensity interval training (HIIT)
- ◆ Tabata
- ◆ pyramid or ladder
- ◆ every minute on the minute (EMOM)
- ◆ as many reps as possible (AMRAP)

You should observe learners delivering one of their group exercise sessions for a minimum of 30 minutes and assess them using a summative observation checklist. The practical sessions can be assessed through a live observation or a recorded submission.

Learners can include the evidence in their portfolios.

Explain how to adapt an exercise session for one of the specialist population groups (outcome 5)

Learners must explain how to adapt one of their exercise sessions for one of the following specialist population groups: young people (aged 13 to 18), older adults (aged 50 plus) and antenatal and postnatal clients. This should include current physical activity guidelines for health, for example guidelines from the UK chief medical officer (CMO). They should explain how the session could be adapted for the group chosen and specific exercise considerations for the group chosen, using current research.

Learners can choose to adapt either one of the induction sessions, one of the sessions from the programme, or the group exercise session.

Learners can include the evidence in their portfolios.

Learners can generate evidence in the form of a stand-alone assignment, oral questioning or as part of an overall unit project.

Evaluate the gym-based exercise inductions for the individual and group, the eight-week gym-based training exercise programme and the group exercise session (outcome 6)

Following completion of the gym-based exercise inductions for the individual and small group, the eight-week programme and the group exercise session, learners must reflect on and evaluate the sessions delivered. They can generate evidence in the form of a stand-alone assignment, oral questioning or as part of an overall unit project. For the eight-week training programme, learners should keep a logbook that includes all sessions and evaluations.

Learners can include the evidence in their portfolios.

Develop sustainability knowledge and understanding, and skills to support clients in the physical activity and health sector (outcome 7)

Learners must develop sustainability knowledge and understanding, and skills in a vocational context.

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements](#) web page.

Information for learners

Exercise Practitioner 1 (SCQF level 7)

This information explains:

- ◆ what the unit is about
- ◆ what you should know or be able to do before you start
- ◆ what you need to do during the unit
- ◆ opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

On completion of this unit, you can instruct and evaluate gym-based exercise sessions for individuals and groups, and deliver gym-based exercise programmes and group exercise sessions. The unit prepares you for employment as a gym instructor practitioner, group exercise practitioner and health navigator. On successful completion of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Physical Activity and Health, you can become a member of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) in the roles previously shown.

You are required to instruct a variety of sessions including:

- ◆ both individual and group gym inductions
- ◆ an eight-week gym-based programme and a group exercise session

These consist of:

- ◆ warm-ups and cool-downs
- ◆ cardiovascular training
- ◆ resistance training
- ◆ functional training
- ◆ flexibility exercises

You must plan and teach your session using the recommended number of cardiovascular, resistance training, functional training and flexibility exercises listed in the evidence requirements of the unit.

While teaching the sessions, you must demonstrate a rapport with your participant(s):

- ◆ good teaching skills, such as demonstrating good technique
- ◆ explaining the teaching points of the exercise in a way that the participant(s) can understand
- ◆ offering feedback in a positive and effective manner

Sessions can then be adapted for a special population group such as:

- ◆ young people (aged 13 to 18)
- ◆ older adults (aged 50 plus)
- ◆ antenatal or postnatal clients

You learn about health and safety in the exercise environment, including:

- ◆ conducting risk assessments
- ◆ the importance of cleaning and emergency evacuation procedures
- ◆ health and safety laws and regulations

You must ensure that:

- ◆ your exercise plan and risk assessment covers the outlined criteria
- ◆ your teaching performance is of the required standard to allow assessment to take place. Your teaching performance and demonstrations will be observed by your lecturer
- ◆ your portfolio or e-portfolio contains written evidence in the form of a session plan, screening questionnaire, risk assessment and evaluations

Administrative information

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Superclass: MA

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Outcome 3 — reduction in the number of sessions to deliver in the eight-week programme from two to one on pages 4 and 28. ◆ To deliver a minimum of one session a week over the eight-week training intervention.	March 2023
2.0	Outcome 1 — addition of four evidence requirements in relation to manual handling, storage of equipment and equipment manufacturers guidelines. Removed meta-skills outcome 7, as this is now included in Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry unit at SCQF level 7.	August 2023
3.0	Outcome 7 — addition of Learning for Sustainability outcome.	March 2024

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.