



Next Generation Higher National Educator Guide

Higher National Certificate Physical Activity and Health

Qualification code: GT6A 47

**This qualification is available in a restricted
delivery model from academic session 2025**

This guide provides information about the Higher National Certificate (HNC) to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the HNC.

You must read it alongside the Grading Pack.

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Purpose of the qualification

This qualification title Higher National Certificate (HNC) Physical Activity and Health reflects the changes in a society that has begun to understand the health, economic and social benefits of leading a healthy and active lifestyle. The qualification helps learners to enter an industry that has a wide range of employment opportunities in Scotland and globally.

The mandatory units focus on the foundational knowledge for a variety of roles in the physical activity and health sector. The qualification focuses on the role of exercise practitioner, but the knowledge and skills can also be transferred and applied to roles such as gym instructor and group exercise instructor. The HNC also supports learners who want to carry out further study to become a personal trainer or work in exercise referral.

The qualification covers underpinning knowledge of anatomy and physiology, training principles, health promotion and behaviour change, nutrition, and working in the physical activity and health industry. Learners develop the necessary skills to become diligent exercise practitioners, including soft skills such as communication and active listening. The optional units of the HNC allow centres to maintain local partnership agreements and deliver an HNC that meets the needs of employers and/or partners.

The qualification promotes a digital-by-design approach and incorporates the development of meta-skills, academic skills and sector-specific knowledge around health and physical activity, to equip learners for future employment or further study.

Structure

Higher National Certificates (HNCs) are at SCQF level 7 and are made up of 120 SCQF credit points (15 SQA credits). HNCs must incorporate at least 80 credit points (10 SQA credits) at SCQF level 7.

HNC and HND are stand-alone qualifications of 15 SQA credits each to support flexibility and increase opportunities for adult learners who return to education and training.

In keeping with the Next Generation: Higher National (NextGen: HN) Design Principles, there are fewer mandatory units in HNC Physical Activity and Health and they are larger in size. Previous iterations included eight mandatory units that had 43 assessments. This prototype award includes five mandatory units and reduces assessment load. Approaches to grading have also been considered to accommodate the Design Principles.

HNCs contain 15 credits that can be used flexibly to increase opportunities for learners returning to education. Refer to the 'Meta-skills' section of this guide for more information.

Framework

The HNC is made up of mandatory and optional units. Learners must complete all the mandatory units and 3 SQA credits from the optional units.

The following Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) professional standards are embedded:

- gym instructor practitioner
- group exercise instructor practitioner
- health navigator

This qualification is jointly certificated with **sportscotland** and CIMSPA.

Mandatory units

Unit code	Unit title	SQA credits	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J6E9 47	Exercise Practitioner 1	3	24	7
J6E8 47	Training Principles for Exercise	3	24	7
J6E7 47	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement	2	16	7
J6EA 47	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition	2	16	7
J6T2 47	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry	2	16	7

Optional units

Unit code	Unit title	SQA credits	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J82R 47	Research Skills	1	8	7
J7X0 47	Strength and Conditioning 1	1	8	7
J6EE 47	Psychology of Physical Activity	1	8	7
J6EF 48	Organising and Delivering a Physical Activity or Health Event	1	8	8
J6EG 47	Flexibility Training	1	8	7

The mandatory units in HNC Physical Activity and Health consist of 96 credit points (12 SQA credits) at SCQF level 7. Centres must ensure learners carry out an additional 24 credit points (3 SQA credits) to achieve their HNC qualification.

Aims of the qualification

Physical activity is an essential feature of our physical and mental well-being. It also has social and societal benefits, which are becoming increasingly recognised by, and integrated in, public health policy. Greater demand is being placed upon industry to have an appropriately knowledgeable, skilled and adaptable workforce.

HNC Physical Activity and Health aims to address these needs and broaden the range of services learners can provide when qualifying from this HNC. This includes building on existing pathways into the physical activity and health industry. We have extended the qualification's reach into public health through the Scottish Government's 'A More Active Scotland: Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan' and the World Health Organization's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030.

The qualification aims to generate a network of knowledgeable and skilled practitioners who can draw on meta-skills to adapt to the needs of their employers, industry and clients.

General aims

1. Develop critical and evaluative thinking, and the ability to manage and absorb large amounts of information.
2. Develop problem solving.
3. Develop self-directed and self-reflective learning.
4. Develop the ability to be flexible and to work co-operatively in a team structure.
5. Develop transferable skills, such as study and research skills, presentation techniques, and personal effectiveness.
6. Enable progression in the SCQF, including progression to higher education.
7. Have opportunities for career planning and enhancing their employment prospects.
8. Develop meta-skills that complement technical and professional knowledge and skills.
9. Develop Learning for Sustainability skills, knowledge, understanding and values.

Specific aims

1. Develop a sound understanding of the principles of anatomy and physiology in relation to exercise and human movement.
2. Develop a sound understanding of the role that nutrition plays in leading an active, healthy lifestyle.
3. Develop an awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of physical activity and health and how this can positively impact the health and well-being of individuals and communities.
4. Develop client screening skills in an exercise and health setting.
5. Increase their awareness of legislative changes and government initiatives in physical activity and public health.
6. Develop and apply transferable exercise skills to analyse, plan and evaluate appropriate exercise regimes for a variety of clients.
7. Develop an evidence-based approach to programme planning.
8. Develop working practices to the current accepted professional standards for gym instructor practitioner, group exercise instructor and health navigator.

Who is this qualification for?

This qualification is for learners who want to develop their knowledge and skills to gain employment in the physical activity and health sector or articulate to university studies. It offers an opportunity for school leavers, adult returners and learners progressing from other lower-level programmes to gain an understanding of the key concepts of working in the physical activity and health sector, to support clients in their journey to become more active and improve their health. Learners develop their knowledge and skills through subject knowledge, working in a practical setting and developing a range of core, essential and transferable skills, including academic skills.

Centres must ensure learners carrying out the qualification are at least 16 years old before the course starts, due to student public liability insurance requirements. Learners between 16- to 18-year-olds may still need to be supervised in the workplace once they have achieved the qualification.

Entry to this qualification is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend that learners have one or more of the following:

- Highers in one or more of the following subject areas:
 - English
 - Biology (including Human Biology)
 - Physical Education
 - Psychology
- National Qualifications at SCQF level 6 in Exercise and Fitness
- National Progression Award (NPA) in sports at SCQF level 6

Recognising prior learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. Formal learning is learning certificated by a recognised awarding or professional body. Non-formal learning includes learning such as employers' in-house training courses. Informal learning is learning based on experience from a variety of environments that is not formally assessed.

It is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full HNC

You can find more information and guidance about the [recognition of prior learning on SQA's website](#).

Articulation and progression

Learners who complete this qualification could go on to:

- other qualifications in physical health and activity or related areas, such as the Higher National Diploma (HND) Physical Activity and Health (year 2) at SCQF level 8
- further study, employment and/or training
- different articulation pathways to undergraduate degree programmes in universities
- learners can progress to further study, often directly to degree programmes (with some advanced entry depending upon local agreements) in subjects such as:
 - Sport and Physical Activity and Health
 - Physical Activity and Health
 - Sport and Exercise Science
 - Strength and Conditioning
 - Food Nutrition and Human Health
 - Sport Studies
 - Sport Development

We recommend that learners who have completed the HNC Physical Activity and Health also have a formally recognised First Aid at Work qualification.

Learners can move into employment in the physical activity and health industry. The following are examples of some occupational areas:

- gym instructor practitioner
- group exercise instructor practitioner
- community activator
- health link worker
- health champion
- health coach
- health trainer

These job roles or titles may not be consistent across the UK.

Professional recognition

CIMSPA endorsement is an integral feature of the qualification.

The HNC Physical Activity and Health is mapped to the following Professional Standards on the CIMSPA standards framework:

- gym instructor practitioner
- group exercise instructor practitioner
- health navigator

Learners can attain CIMSPA membership when they successfully complete the HNC.

CIMSPA employer partners recognise the value in endorsed qualifications, as they meet industry standards, and provide confidence that learners are arriving with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

The HNC Physical Activity and Health is also a gateway qualification to lifelong learning and a long-standing career in the industry. Learners can progress to

‘professional’ or ‘chartered status’ as they continue to build on their qualification with continuing professional development (CPD), and their experience in employment.

Credit transfer arrangements

Centres can make decisions about transferring credit. They can transfer credit if the subject-related content of the units is broadly equivalent. Centres should consider the currency of a learner’s achievement before transferring credit.

How the qualification meets employer and higher education institution needs

This qualification is designed in collaboration with employers, higher education institutions (HEIs), practitioners and professional bodies to meet the sector need.

The following tables show how the qualification can benefit employers and HEIs by equipping learners with the necessary skill set:

- Table 1 shows how units map to the aims of the qualification.
- Table 2 shows how the units map to CIMPISA standards.
- Table 3 shows the assessment strategy for the qualification.

Table 1: mapping qualification aims to units

General aims

Key: aim is directly relevant to unit (X), aim is optional in this unit (O), aim is not applicable to this unit (N/A)

Unit code	Unit title	Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9
J6E9 47	Exercise Practitioner 1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
J6E8 47	Training Principles for Exercise	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
J6E7 47	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement	x	N/A	x	N/A	x	x	N/A	x	x
J6EA 47	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition	x	N/A	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
J6T2 47	Preparing to work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Specific aims

Unit code	Unit title	Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8
J6E9 47	Exercise Practitioner 1	N/A	N/A	x	x	x	x	x	x
J6E8 47	Training Principles for Exercise	N/A	N/A	x	x	N/A	x	x	x
J6E7 47	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
J6EA 47	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition	N/A	x	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
J6T2 47	Preparing to work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry	N/A	N/A	N/A	x	x	N/A	x	x

Table 2: mapping units to CIMPSA standards

This qualification has been mapped to the following Professional Standard for a Gym Instructor Practitioner from CIMSPA.

1. Maximise the customer experience

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K1.1	Customer needs	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3. Outcome 4, outcome 5 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 6	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K1.2	Customer service	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K1.3	Customer engagement	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K1.4	Customer communication	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio
S1.1	Customer data	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 4	Learner portfolio

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S1.2	Customer engagement	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio
S1.3	Customer service	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S1.4	Develop rapport with customers	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S1.5	Professional demeanour	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2	Learner portfolio
S1.6	Communication	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2	Learner portfolio

2. Routine maintenance and cleaning

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K2.1	Cleaning substances	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.2	Cleaning equipment	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.3	Safe systems of work	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.4	Personal safety	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.5	Hazards	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.6	Cleaning schedules	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.7	Waste management	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S2.1	Preparing to clean	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S2.2	Cleaning activities	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S2.3	Hazards	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 1	Learner portfolio
S2.4	Communication	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 6	Learner portfolio

3. Exercise anatomy and physiology

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K3.1	Structure and function of the circulatory system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 3	SOLAR assessment
K3.2	Structure and function of the respiratory system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 3	SOLAR assessment
K3.3	Structure and function of the skeleton	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K3.4	Joints	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K3.5	Muscular system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1, outcome 2	SOLAR assessment
K3.6	Life-course of the musculoskeletal system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 5	SOLAR assessment
K3.7	Energy systems	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 5	SOLAR assessment

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K3.8	Nervous system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 2	SOLAR assessment
K3.9	Digestive system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K3.10	Anatomical planes of movement	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K3.11	Anatomical terms of location	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment and/or learner portfolio
K3.12	Anatomical terms of location	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment and/or learner portfolio
S3.1	Applied biomechanics and kinesiology	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1, outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio

4. Consultations, assessments and gym inductions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K4.1	Client consultation process	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K4.2	Health screening and risk stratification	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K4.3	Client assessment and review process	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K4.4	Client induction process	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2	Learner portfolio

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S4.1	Conduct consultations, assessments and gym inductions	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio

5. Lifestyle management and client motivation:

CIMPSA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K5.1	Lifestyle and health promotion	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 4, outcome 5 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1, outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K5.2	Prevention and management of common health conditions	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1, outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 5 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K5.3	Behaviour change and exercise adherence	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio

CIMPSA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S5.1	Motivation	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
S5.2	Goal setting	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1, outcome 3, outcome 4 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 5	Learner portfolio
S5.3	Health promotion	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 2, outcome 3,	Academic report

6. Plan and review gym programmes

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K6.1	Plan gym-based programmes	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1, outcome 2, outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio
K6.2	Monitor and review gym-based exercise programmes	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 5, outcome 6	Learner portfolio
S6.1	Plan gym-based exercise programmes	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 6	Learner portfolio
S6.2	Monitor and review gym-based exercise programmes	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 6	Learner portfolio

7. Exercise supervision and technique

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K7.1	Gym-based exercise training methods	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1, outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K7.2	Gym-based exercise technique	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or assessor checklist
K7.3	Gym-based exercise demonstrations	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or assessor checklist
K7.4	Supervise gym-based exercise	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or assessor checklist
S7.1	Supervise gym-based exercise	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio
S7.2	Gym-based exercise demonstrations	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or assessor checklist

8. Professional practice

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K8.1	Conduct and ethics	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K8.2	National guidelines, legislation and organisational procedures	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K8.3	Professional development	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 5	Learner portfolio
K8.4	Business acumen	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 6 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 5 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S8.1	Work alone and as part of a team with minimal supervision	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S8.2	Responsibility and professional duty of care to clients	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

This qualification has been mapped to the following Professional Standard for a Group Exercise Instructor Practitioner from CIMSPA

1. Maximise the customer experience:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K1.1	Customer needs	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 6	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K1.2	Customer service	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K1.3	Customer engagement	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K1.4	Customer communication	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio
S1.1	Customer data	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 4	Learner portfolio
S1.2	Customer engagement	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S1.3	Customer service	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S1.4	Develop rapport with customers	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S1.5	Professional demeanour	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2	Learner portfolio
S1.6	Communication	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2	Learner portfolio

2. Exercise anatomy and physiology:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K2.1	Structure and function of the circulatory system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 3	SOLAR assessment
K2.2	Structure and function of the respiratory system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 3	SOLAR assessment
K2.3	Structure and function of the skeleton	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K2.4	Joints	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K2.5	Muscular system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1, outcome 2	SOLAR assessment
K2.6	Life-course of the musculoskeletal system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 5	SOLAR assessment
K2.7	Energy systems	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 5	SOLAR assessment

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K2.8	Nervous system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 2	SOLAR assessment
K2.9	Digestive system	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K2.10	Anatomical planes of movement	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment
K2.11	Anatomical terms of location	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment and/or learner portfolio
K2.12	Anatomical terms of location	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1	SOLAR assessment and/or learner portfolio
S2.1	Applied biomechanics and kinesiology	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement: outcome 1, outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio

3. Lifestyle management and client motivation:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K3.1	Lifestyle and health promotion	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 4, outcome 5 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1, outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K3.2	Prevention and management of common health conditions	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1, outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 5 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
K3.3	Behaviour change and exercise adherence	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S3.1	Motivation	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3	Learner portfolio
S3.2	Goal setting	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1, outcome 3, outcome 4 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 5	Learner portfolio
S3.3	Health promotion	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 2, outcome 3,	Learner portfolio

4. Plan and review group exercise:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K4.1	Plan group exercise programmes	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 5	Learner portfolio
K4.2	Monitor and review gym-based exercise programmes	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 5, outcome 6	Learner portfolio
S4.1	Plan group exercise programmes	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 5	Learner portfolio
S4.2	Monitor and review group exercise programmes	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 6	Learner portfolio

5. Deliver and supervise group exercise:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K5.1	Group exercise training methods	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 1, outcome 2 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 4	Learner portfolio
K5.2	Group exercise technique	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 4	Learner portfolio
K5.3	Deliver group exercise	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 4	Learner portfolio
K5.4	Supervise group exercise	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 4	Learner portfolio
S5.1	Group exercise demonstrations	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 4	Learner portfolio
S5.2	Deliver group exercise sessions/ programmes	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 4	Learner portfolio

6. Professional practice:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K6.1	Conduct and ethics	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K6.2	National guidelines, legislation and organisational procedures	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K6.3	Professional development	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 5	Learner portfolio
K6.4	Business acumen	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 6 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 5 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S6.1	Work alone and as part of a team with minimal supervision	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S6.2	Responsibility and professional duty of care to clients	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

This qualification has been mapped to the following Professional Standard for a Health Navigator from CIMSPA

1. Care, communication and relationships:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K1.1	Person-centred care	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1, outcome 2, outcome 3 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K1.2	Effective communication	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K1.3	Professional relationships	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S1.1	Person-centred interventions	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 2 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S1.2	Effective communication	Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 2, outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 2, outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S1.3	Professional relationships	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

2. Supporting behaviour change:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K2.1	Underpinning knowledge	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.2	Intervention style	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K2.3	Maintaining client contact	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3 Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S2.1	Theory of behaviour change and underpinning theoretical knowledge	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1, outcome 3 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 2	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S2.2	Style of intervention	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 3 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S2.3	Maintaining client contact	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

3. Health, activity and lifestyle:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K3.1	Health context and health inequalities	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1	Digital artefact and/or poster presentation
K3.2	Definitions, benefits and risks of physical activity / inactivity	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1	Digital artefact and/or poster presentation
K3.3	Key health and lifestyle messages and guidance	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1	Digital artefact and/or poster presentation
S3.1	Targeted and tailored interventions	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 3, outcome 4 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 2	Digital artefact and/or poster presentation
S3.2	Tailored benefits and risks of increasing physical activity	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1	Digital artefact and/or poster presentation
S3.3	Tailored health and lifestyle messages and guidance	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1	Digital artefact and/or poster presentation

4. Partners, pathways and signposting:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K4.1	Engagement with partners and people	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1, outcome 2	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K4.2	Local pathways	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K4.3	Signposting, resources and records	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S4.1	Engagement with partners and people	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S4.2	Local pathways	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S4.3	Signposting, resources and records	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions

5. Professional skills:

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
K5.1	Scope of practice and professional boundaries	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 5 Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K5.2	Legislative, regulatory and health safety requirements	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 4	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
K5.3	Data collection and evaluation	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 2, outcome 3 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3, outcome 4, outcome 5	Learner portfolio
K5.4	Continuing professional development	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 5	Learner portfolio

CIMSPA reference	Knowledge and understanding	Evidence requirements	Suggested assessment method
S5.1	Professional boundaries	Exercise Practitioner 1: outcome 5 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 4	Learner portfolio
S5.2	Legislative, regulatory and health and safety requirements	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1	Learner portfolio and/or restricted response questions
S5.3	Data collection and evaluation	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 1 Training Principles for Exercise: outcome 3, outcome 5 Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition: outcome 1	Learner portfolio
S5.4	Continual professional development	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry: outcome 5	Learner portfolio

Table 3: assessment strategy for the qualification

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment method
J6E8 47	Training Principles for Exercise	<p>This unit allows for integration of assessment with Exercise Practitioner 1. The outcomes across both units complement each other and allow for learners to plan and deliver inductions and exercise sessions to individuals and small groups.</p> <p>Learners have a range of assessment methods, including open-book assignments, project work and formative and summative practical observations. Learners develop an exercise library for gym-based movements, cardiovascular exercises, flexibility exercises and mobility exercises. Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• plan an appropriate gym-based induction for an individual and a small group• conduct a client consultation and apply appropriate fitness and health assessments for a healthy client• develop an individual training intervention — assessed in the Exercise Practitioner 1 unit as a practical assessment• develop a group training intervention — assessed in the Exercise Practitioner 1 unit as a practical assessment

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment method
J6E9 47	Exercise Practitioner 1	<p>You can integrate assessment for this unit and Training Principles for Exercise. The outcomes across both units complement each other and allow for learners to plan and deliver inductions and exercise sessions to individuals and small groups.</p> <p>Learners undertake a range of assessment methods, including open-book assignments, project work, and formative and summative practical observations. Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the importance of health and safety in an exercise environment, and complete risk assessments for a variety of environments • learn about health and safety policy and legislation in relation to the industry, the importance of cleaning and maintaining equipment, and answer a series of closed-book questions <p>As this is a largely practical unit, learners are formatively and summatively assessed through observation checklists, or by recording themselves completing practical tasks for the assessor to judge and feedback on. These practical observations include gym inductions for an individual and small group, as well as learners being observed taking an individual and a small group through a planned exercise session.</p> <p>As Exercise Practitioner 1 is the project unit in this qualification, assessments for other mandatory units appear in the learner portfolio or e-portfolio. You must ensure that all evidence in the portfolio or e-portfolio meets the evidence requirements for each outcome.</p>

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment method
J6EA 47	Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition	<p>This unit allows for integration of assessment with other mandatory units in the HNC, including Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7, Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry at SCQF level 7, and Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement at SCQF level 7. The outcomes across these units complement each other, allowing you to reduce the volume of assessment. There are details of cross- and holistic assessment in Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition at SCQF level 7.</p> <p>Learners do a range of assessment methods, including open-book assignments, reports, portfolio, e-portfolio work, client consultations, oral questioning, presentation, factsheet, infographic or other similar digital artefacts that develop content for an e-portfolio. Learners reflect on current industry practices in health promotion and behaviour change with a focus on physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being, and awareness of other elements that affect well-being.</p> <p>This unit focuses on developing evidence-based knowledge and practical skills, where learners evaluate information, build relationships and generate a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates their competence and reflective learning. Learners can generate evidence from a workplace setting or through role-play simulations.</p>

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment method
J6E7 47	Anatomy and Physiology for Exercise and Human Movement	<p>This unit has various forms of evidence gathering, where centres can choose to use closed-book or open-book assessments. Learners can evidence knowledge and skills by multiple-choice, short response and/or extended response questions. We encourage you to deliver theory, experiential participation and practical instruction through gym and group exercise programmes as part of the assessment in the units Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7 and Exercise Practitioner 1 at SCQF level 7. Learners demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through the client consultation, and health and fitness testing. They also plan safe and effective exercise programmes for a range of clients.</p>
J6T2 47	Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry	<p>This unit allows for integration of assessment with Exercise Practitioner 1. The outcomes across both units complement each other and allow for learners to build their knowledge and skills in working with clients.</p> <p>Learners do a range of assessment methods, including open-book assignments, reports, a project and logbook work. They use a social media platform of their choice to design and create an account.</p>

Meta-skills

Every NextGen: HN Qualification gives learners the opportunity to develop meta-skills.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help people to adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation. Each of these is made up of four meta-skills and a number of sub-skills.

- Self-management — focusing, integrity, adapting, initiative
- Social intelligence — communicating, feeling, collaborating, leading
- Innovation — curiosity, creativity, sense-making, critical thinking

From early in the qualification, we want learners to identify and understand the meta-skills they can develop, and to appreciate the personal and professional value of these skills. We want to support learners to continue to articulate, use and build on them long after they have achieved their qualification. In this way, we help learners to develop broad skills profiles, enabling them to thrive in a changing world.

Every NextGen: HN unit signposts opportunities for learners to develop meta-skills, and there is an assessed outcome in one of the mandatory units. When you make your whole-qualification grade decisions, you consider learners' commitment to engaging with meta-skills development.

You do not assess learners on their competence or progress in individual meta-skills. Instead, you assess them on evidence that they have engaged with a personal process of development. Meta-skills development is founded on a clear process of self-assessment, goal setting, action planning and reflective practice.

You can find meta-skills teaching, learning and assessment resources on [SQA's meta-skills web page](#).

Meta-skills in HNC Physical Activity and Health

The HNC includes opportunities for learners to develop meta-skills to support the active development of professional practice and behaviours, and to give them self-awareness and understanding that they can use these meta-skills to increase and discuss their employability. This is embedded in the Exercise Practitioner unit.

Grading and meta-skills

Meta-skills are a key part of the NextGen: HN qualifications and learners develop them throughout the group award. Competence in individual meta-skills is not assessed or graded. For example, the qualification does not judge the quality of learners' feeling or creativity, or their specific progress in any given meta-skill. Rather, it is the process of development the learner goes through that contributes to the whole qualification judgement. This means learners should provide evidence of planning, developing and reflecting on their meta-skills. The grading matrix includes criteria on meta-skills, which you should use to support this judgement. See the NextGen: HN Meta-skills, Outcome and Assessment Guidance document for support with assessing meta-skills.

Learning for Sustainability

Context

The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UK in 2015, has shaped the development of Scottish, national and international sustainability policy. It sets out the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), which are central to the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#). Learning for Sustainability (LfS) is a commitment to embedding the SDGs in Scottish education.

LfS embraces global citizenship, sustainable development, social justice, human rights, climate change, biodiversity loss, equality and inclusion. Learners develop their capacity to deal with the unpredictable social, economic and environmental challenges facing our rapidly changing world.

LfS combines:

- education for sustainable development (ESD)
- global citizenship
- outdoor learning

ESD is the internationally used term for sustainability education. Although LfS has a broader remit, the terms are largely interchangeable. Colleges and universities tend to use ESD, while schools usually use LfS. Both focus on a broad range of social, economic and environmental themes and approaches across all levels of education. SQA uses LfS as an umbrella term.

Learning for Sustainability in Next Generation Higher National Qualifications

Sustainability is a core component in this qualification.

Learners who complete this qualification should have:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the SDGs
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

Sustainability is embedded as an outcome in the Exercise Practitioner 1 unit.

Learners who complete this outcome can:

- assess their own knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs
- review unit content against the SDGs to identify a sustainability-related issue
- apply knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs to propose improvements

You can cover any of the SDGs that are relevant to the subject area.

Find out more about SQA's approach on the [NextGen: HN Learning for Sustainability web page](#). There is an LfS reflective template available in the resources section. You may find it helpful as a starting point for considering how the SDGs are, or could be, embedded in a qualification, unit or assessment.

Grading

Please see the Grading Pack for this qualification for more information on making grade judgements.

Grading in NextGen: HN Qualifications produces a valid and reliable record of a learner's level of achievement across the breadth of the qualification content.

As well as grading the whole qualification, you assess individual units on a pass or fail basis. Each unit has evidence requirements that learners must achieve before you can consider them for whole-qualification grading.

Whole-qualification grade outcomes

Learners who pass NextGen: HN Qualifications receive one of the following grade outcomes for the qualification as a whole:

- Achieved with Distinction
- Achieved with Merit
- Achieved

To determine a learner's whole-qualification grade, you use the grading matrix provided in the Grading Pack to assess and judge their performance across the key aspects of the HNC. You must align your judgements with the following whole-qualification grade descriptors.

Whole-qualification grade descriptors

Achieved with Distinction

The learner has achieved an excellent standard across the course content, going significantly beyond meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and consistently used them to apply skills to complete high-quality work. They engaged significantly with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Achieved with Merit

The learner has achieved a very good standard across the course content, going beyond meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a very good knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and consistently used them to apply skills to complete work of a standard above that expected for an Achieved grade. They actively engaged with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Achieved

The learner has achieved a good standard across the course content, credibly meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a good knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and used them to apply skills to complete work of the required standard. They engaged with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Approaches to delivery and assessment

The following information can help you to shape learning and teaching activities.

We recommend you integrate delivery of Exercise Practitioner 1 at SCQF level 7 and Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7. Training Principles for Exercise at SCQF level 7 includes the screening and planning aspects for working with clients and provides the planning basis for the practical delivery assessments in Exercise Practitioner 1 at SCQF level 7.

There are also opportunities to integrate delivery of outcomes from Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry, and Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition.

Possible delivery methods include:

- classroom activities
- field trips
- visits and group work

You should use learning and teaching approaches that are varied and appropriate to the aims of the unit.

Assessors and internal verifiers must hold an industry and/or subject-specific qualification equivalent to the CIMSPA Professional Standards embedded in the qualification. Centre staff should have relevant industry experience and be able to demonstrate industry-relevant CPD to maintain their subject-specific knowledge and skills.

Sequencing or integrating units

We recommend that you teach and assess all the mandatory units across the whole academic session. This gives scope for learners to develop their knowledge and skills in

becoming an exercise practitioner and to review their meta-skills development in other contexts and units.

While the exact time allocated to a 1 credit Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours. The following tables show suggested delivery models using a two semester or three block timetable. These are based on delivery of 36 hours for 8 SCQF points (1 SQA credit). This is only a suggested model and there are many other ways to schedule learning and teaching for HNC Physical Activity and Health.

Suggested timetable for two semesters (18 weeks per semester)

Unit	Semester 1	Semester 2
Anatomy and Physiology	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)
Training Principles for Exercise	3 hours per week (1.5 SQA credits)	3 hours per week (1.5 SQA credits)
Exercise Practitioner 1	3 hours per week (1.5 SQA credits)	3 hours per week (1.5 SQA credits)
Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)
Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)
Optional unit 1	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	Not applicable

Unit	Semester 1	Semester 2
Optional unit 2	Not applicable	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)
Optional unit 3	Not applicable	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)

We recommend that centres choose two optional units in semester 2, as this is typically when learners are being practically assessed, working with clients or doing a work placement.

Suggested timetable for three blocks (12 weeks per block)

Unit	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Anatomy and Physiology	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	Not applicable
Training Principles for Exercise	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)
Exercise Practitioner 1	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)
Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition	Not applicable	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)
Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	Not applicable	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)

Unit	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Optional unit 1	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	Not applicable	Not applicable
Optional unit 2	Not applicable	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)	Not applicable
Optional unit 3	Not applicable	Not applicable	2 hours per week (1 SQA credit)

Additional guidance for Research Skills unit delivery

The Research Skills unit develops skills in planning, investigating, analysing, evaluating, and presenting complex information from a variety of primary and secondary sources relevant to the context of sport, health and physical activity.

You can deliver this unit as a stand-alone research project or within the following mandatory units:

- Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry at SCQF level 7
- Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition at SCQF level 7

Sport, health and physical activity resources for learners include (but are not limited to):

- published academic journals
- academic books
- Scottish Health Survey
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- Public Health Scotland (PHS)
- national governing bodies, such as **sportscotland**

Approaches to delivery

Learners should have the opportunity to discuss current or local sport, health and physical activity issues to build on their experience, emphasise the importance of accuracy in interpreting reliable primary and secondary data, and encourage research focus.

You can provide learners with examples of primary and secondary sources appropriate to the area of research.

Primary sources could include:

- interviews
- surveys
- focus groups
- personal observations
- meeting records
- transcript recordings
- fieldwork and personal observation in a workplace

Primary sources listed are examples only. This is not an exhaustive list.

Secondary sources could include:

- websites
- books
- professional journals
- associated health publications
- associated sport publications

Secondary sources listed are examples only. This is not an exhaustive list.

Before accessing secondary sources, a tour of the library can help learners identify suitable secondary sources. Similarly, an online tour or training can help them access online secondary sources, such as online bibliographic databases. You can give

learners evaluation criteria to check the reliability, authority and purpose of the information they access.

You should encourage learners to learn the techniques for research and introduce them to a range of survey and interview types and methods. Assessors can give learners advice on:

- note-taking
- questionnaire design
- sampling methods and procedures
- interview skills

Learners can practise designing interview questions and questionnaires in small focus groups. You can use peer discussions to evaluate the relevance of primary resource design, purpose and practicality. You can explain how to collate tables or diagrams to summarise results and present numerical data effectively.

You should encourage learners to generate original ideas as they analyse and evaluate findings relating to the aims and objectives of the research. The content, format, medium, reporting and referencing systems of the research are recognised by the type of investigation and the vocational discipline. These may vary considerably, depending on the topic of study.

You should emphasise the importance of presenting information and conclusions to a professional standard.

To support learners in completing each outcome, we recommend that you give them an outcome-specific template with structured headings to show the content and detail required.

The following are pointers that most research investigations or academic reports should cover.

Academic report writing structure

Title page

Learners should include the title of their research, their name and the date. The title should reflect the nature of their research and be succinct and to the point.

Acknowledgements

Learners may wish to acknowledge the help given to them throughout their research. Acknowledgements generally come after the title page.

Contents

Learners should produce the contents page when their report is complete.

The abstract

In most cases, an abstract is required. Practices can vary depending on the further or higher institution attended, so it is best for learners to follow their centre's policy and procedures. It can be quite difficult to say in a few words what their research sets out to do, the methods employed and what conclusions were reached. Learners should get into the habit of looking at abstracts, which are usually placed at the beginning of journal articles.

Aims and purpose of the research

This should be a short explanation of the purpose of the research. Learners should explain the research problem in a few sentences and provide any background to the research to place it in context.

Draw attention to any limitations of the research. Learners cannot do everything in small-scale research.

Review of the literature

Not all academic reports require a review of previous research. In the main, a review of literature is normally reserved for those who are participating in research at SCQF levels 11 (Masters) and 12 (Doctorate).

In a small-scale research project, learners may decide, with your agreement, to use their reading to support or reject arguments throughout their report. The value of the review is that it allows learners to explain the background and context of their research.

If the literature review is required, it can normally be written first. If learners have structured their writing skills sufficiently, they may be able to write up sections and sub-sections as they have completed them. Much of the work of this section will be ready for revision before they begin to collect data. Learners may find that they need to adapt their original version as they progress through their small-scale research project.

Methods of data collection

This section details how the learner investigated the problem and why they employed particular methods and techniques. It provides accounts of the:

- procedure
- size of sample
- method of selection
- choice of variables and controls
- tests of measurement
- statistical analysis (if any are provided)

Learners should consult with you about how much detail is required. They should define important terms precisely, along with any deficiencies in the methods they mention.

Statement of results

This is the main part of learners' academic reports. It consists of text and, if necessary, tables and figures. Tables, charts and graphs should illustrate and illuminate the text. The text written after the results should highlight significant aspects of the findings, so that all relevant facts are presented in a way that draws attention to what is most important.

All tables and figures should be numbered, given a title and carefully checked before learners submit their reports.

Analysis and discussion

Learners should start this section by restating the problem, before discussing how the results affect existing knowledge of the subject. If the research is aimed at testing a certain hypothesis, then this section should demonstrate whether it was or wasn't supported by the evidence. In most instances, it makes sense to write the following sections (review of literature, methods of data collection, analysis and discussion) in sequence, to ensure continuity and logical progression.

Summary and conclusions

The main conclusions have been discussed in the statement of results section and should be summarised succinctly. Learners should only make conclusions that can be justifiably drawn from their findings. Before learners write this section, they should read through the whole report and make a note of the key points.

List of references

References should:

- justify and support arguments
- allow learners to make comparisons with other research

- demonstrate learners' familiarity with their field of work

(Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (2010) *How to Research*. (4th edn). Maidenhead: Open University Press.)

Opinions vary as to whether learners should include a full bibliography or a list of references, or both. Some centres require a full bibliography, which includes all sources consulted during preparation of the research. Learners should use the recognised referencing system used by your centre.

Appendices

Learners should include copies of any data collection instruments (such as questionnaires and interview schedules) in the appendices, unless they have been instructed otherwise.

Length

You should offer learners guidance on the length of the small-scale research project. Please refer to the unit specification for further details. If a maximum number of words is specified, learners should not exceed that number.

Quotations

Learners must acknowledge all quotations. If quotes are only a few words or one sentence, it is sufficient to acknowledge them by using inverted commas in the main text, with the source in brackets. If the quotation is longer, learners should indent it and state the author, date of publication and page number.

Presentations

Academic reports are usually word-processed using double-line spacing. Learners should number pages and print on one side of the page only, leaving a left-hand margin

of 1.5 inches. Learners should be aware of your centre's rules about presentation. It is up to your centre whether reports need to be bound.

Oral presentation

An oral presentation of relevant information from the research investigation should include:

- an analysis and evaluation of information gathered from the research investigation
- a summary of findings and accurate conclusions drawn
- effective use of non-verbal communication
- use of appropriate pace and tone
- confident use of audio-visual support
- confident and accurate responses to in-depth questioning

Additional guidance on integrated or holistic assessment

Holistic or integrated assessment focuses on assessing a number of outcomes in a unit together, or in some cases, assessing the unit as a whole, rather than by outcome.

When assessing a unit of competence holistically, the assessment activities integrate a number of aspects of the competence. Holistic or integrated assessment can reduce the time spent on assessment and can promote greater equity in the assessment process.

When developing or revising a NextGen: HN Qualification, SQA works with a development team to devise an appropriate assessment strategy that accommodates holistic or integrated assessment. However, the practice of integrating units for the purposes of learning and teaching is a centre-led activity.

Units are designed to facilitate holistic or integrated assessment approaches that prevent large, unwieldy assessments.

Sometimes more than one piece of evidence is needed for a unit. The outcomes across units complement each other, as learners work with a client or a range of clients. They develop and deliver training interventions.

Evidence requirements must do what they say: specify requirements for evidence of learner competence in the unit. The evidence must be of sufficient quality for an assessor or verifier to judge that the learner has achieved the unit.

Assessing project units

Exercise Practitioner 1 is the main project unit for this qualification. As learners take the mandatory units, their learner portfolio consists of a range of assessments that showcases their journey to become an exercise practitioner. Each of the mandatory units is mapped to the national occupational standards for gym instructor practitioner, group exercise instructor practitioner and health navigator. Learners should gain a wide range of knowledge and skills in each of these standards, as well as developing an evidence-based approach to working with clients through work placement and academic investigation.

Remediation and re-assessment in Next Generation Higher National Qualifications

Remediation

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learners' responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, the assessor must formally note such instances, in writing or as a recording, and make them available to the internal and external verifier.

The size and structure of the larger NextGen: HN units should mean that the assessor or lecturer is close enough to ongoing assessment activity in project-based units to identify the requirement for remediation as it occurs.

Re-assessment

Learners who do not meet the minimum evidence requirements in their first submission, and on occasions where minor or oral remediation are not appropriate, assessors and lecturers can ask learners to submit a second submission to re-assess their competence in meeting the evidence requirements for the outcome.

As part of the NextGen: HN Physical Activity and Health qualification, we have introduced greater opportunities for holistic and cross-assessment within the larger units of the framework, and therefore expect instances of re-assessment to be minimal. If re-assessment is required within the project-based unit, learners must be given a re-assessment opportunity, but we recommend that this should be undertaken with an alternative client.

Resource requirements

Centres delivering this qualification must have suitably qualified staff for each of the subject components. Your centre should already have established processes to ensure staff are appropriately qualified to deliver in this subject area. New centres must have staff who have subject knowledge. They can demonstrate this with an SCQF level 8 or above in an exercise or fitness-based subject qualification, or a relevant industry-recognised qualification.

Learners should have access to a range of gym equipment, including a selection for each of the following:

- cardiovascular equipment
- fixed resistance machines including a cable pulley
- free weight equipment, including barbells, dumbbells, Olympic bars, weight plates, adjustable benches, squat or power rack, and appropriate flooring
- functional exercise equipment including medicine balls, kettlebells, Swiss balls, mats, powerbags and plyo boxes

This is not an exhaustive list.

Learners should also have access to library resources, including online resources such as SPORTDiscus to allow them to research topics and theories across the physical activity and health subject area. We recommend that learners can access original research articles and textbooks to support learning and teaching across each of the mandatory and optional units. You should take care when you refer to research articles that these are accessible to learners.

Access to digital equipment, such as computers, laptops or tablets, helps support learners' digital skills development. 'Digital first' is an aim of NextGen: HN developments.

Information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The units in this HNC are designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

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

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

Internal and external verification

You must make sure all instruments of assessment you use in this qualification are internally verified according to your centre's policies and SQA's guidelines.

SQA carries out external verification to ensure that internal assessment meets the national guidelines for this qualification.

More information on internal and external verification is available in SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#) and in [Next Generation: Higher National Quality Assurance — Guidance for Centres](#).

Glossary

SQA credits: 1 SQA credit equals 8 SCQF credit points.

SQA credit value indicates the contribution the unit makes to an SQA qualification. An SQA credit value of 1 represents approximately 40 hours of learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is Scotland's national framework for describing qualifications. We use SCQF terminology in this guide to refer to credits and levels. [For more information on the SCQF, visit the SCQF website.](#)

SCQF credit points indicate the amount of learning required to complete a qualification. NextGen HNCs and HNDs are worth 120 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels indicate how hard the qualification is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. NextGen HNCs are at SCQF level 7 and NextGen HNDs are at SCQF level 8.

Information for learners

HNC Physical Activity and Health

This information explains:

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

Qualification information

The HNC Physical Activity and Health is a new qualification. It supports the changing landscape of the sector and is in line with government and public health guidance and initiatives. An increasing number of people are becoming more active and understand the importance of looking after their health and well-being. There are several Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) professional standards embedded in the HNC. These allow you to gain employment in a variety of roles and get a better understanding of how you can support clients to navigate the range of partners or organisations that support people in becoming more active and leading a healthy lifestyle.

The unit Training Principles for Exercise enables you to develop an appreciation of the science behind coaching. It also builds the technical competencies you need to plan and prepare both individual and group-based exercise and physical activity sessions.

You develop knowledge and applied skills of physical and health-related assessments with a client and develop training interventions with formulated rationales.

The unit Exercise Practitioner 1 prepares you for employment in the physical activity and health industry as a gym instructor practitioner, group exercise practitioner and

health navigator. You develop skills to instruct and evaluate gym-based exercise sessions for individuals and groups, and deliver gym-based exercise programmes and group exercise sessions.

The unit Anatomy for Exercise and Human Movement provides you with knowledge, skills and understanding of the body systems and basic biomechanical principles that underpin human movement.

The unit Health Promotion, Behaviour Change and Nutrition develops your understanding of health promotion, behaviour change and nutrition. It also develops your skills in applying evidence-based practical skills, to support a personalised action plan for an individual or group. You describe health promotion in different settings for selected topics, understand professional roles and signpost sources of support for clients.

The unit Preparing to Work in the Physical Activity and Health Industry helps prepare you to gain employment through workplace experience, and develop a range of skills in a practical environment. You also self-reflect on your performance and focus on continuing professional development (CPD) and how this is beneficial to your future career development.

You are assessed in several ways, including through closed-book assessments, open-book assignments, a portfolio, project work, posters, presentations, practical observations (summative and formative) and completing a work placement.

Meta-skills

You carry out a self-assessment of your own meta-skills baseline, create a plan for meta-skills development, carry out activities to develop and demonstrate meta-skills, and use reflective practice to monitor and assess the meta-skills you have improved or developed.

You develop meta-skills through experience. They include problem solving, critical thinking, communication, creativity and leadership.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Please check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

If a unit is revised:

- no new centres can be approved to offer the previous version of the unit
- centres should only enter learners for the previous version of the unit if they can complete it before its finish date

For more information on NextGen: HN Qualifications please visit the [NextGen: HN web page](#).

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