

Next Generation Professional Development Award

PDA Personal Training at SCQF level 8

Qualification code: GV29 48

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

This guide provides information about the Professional Development Award (PDA) 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 PDA.

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Purpose of the qualification

The title of the Professional Development Award (PDA) reflects the Chartered Institute of Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) Professional Standard for Personal Trainer. This PDA also sits in the Next Generation (NextGen) Higher National Diploma (HND) Physical Activity and Health mandatory section.

This PDA helps learners coach clients on a one-to-one and small group basis towards their health and fitness goals. They:

- plan and deliver creative and personalised exercise programmes and instruction
- develop knowledge of nutrition, nutritional strategies and nutritional assessment tools to provide clients with nutritional advice and overall lifestyle management guidance
- analyse a client's needs
- adapt and modify guidance to motivate clients to positively change their behaviour
- improve clients' overall wellbeing by providing specialist and tailored advice in their scope of practice
- understand the importance of being able to refer clients to relevant appropriate professionals for specialist information and guidance, such as a physiotherapist, registered dietitian, medical specialist, where required
- develop a comprehensive understanding of ethical practices, business, finance, sales and marketing so that they can build and retain a stable client base once they progress into industry
- develop a broad understanding of the principles and practices of being a personal trainer practitioner, and leading individual and/or group exercise sessions in different environments
- plan, teach and evaluate safe and effective individual and/or group personal training sessions
- analyse factors that affect a healthy lifestyle, the wellbeing of clients and behaviour change

- understand the planning process to provide personal training support to different client groups
- develop their practical skills by carrying out client consultations and physical assessments with a specified client group (sedentary; recovering from an injury; over-trained; high-level performer; sport-specific performer; or clients with low-risk health conditions)
- further develop their knowledge and apply their skills by carrying out training interventions with clients
- develop their knowledge and understanding of anatomy, physiology and applied biomechanics
- develop knowledge of nutrition, nutritional strategies and nutritional assessment tools that can be used with clients
- develop their own meta-skills in a vocational context, and develop sustainability knowledge and understanding linked to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (UN SDGs)
- examine the scope of practice and industry requirements for personal trainer practitioners, and the importance of accessing relevant and recognised continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills

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

Structure

PDA's are made up of at least one double credit unit or two units. These can only be NextGen: HN units.

All PDA's and their component units are credit rated against SCQF. They may be set at SCQF levels 6 to 12.

At SCQF level 6, PDA's are made up of units with a minimum credit value of 12 SCQF credit points.

At SCQF levels 7 to 12, PDA's have a minimum credit value of 16 SCQF credit points. At least half the SCQF credit points must be at the level of the qualification.

Framework

The PDA is made up of two mandatory units. Learners must complete both units.

Mandatory units

Unit code	Unit title	SQA credits	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J7CB 48	Exercise Practitioner 2	3	24	8
J7C6 48	Training Principles for Personal Trainers	2	16	8

This PDA embeds the CIMSPA Professional Standard for Personal Trainer.

Aims of the qualification

Due to the recognised benefits of physical activity that are being integrated into public health policy, greater demand is being placed on the physical activity and health industry to have an appropriately knowledgeable, skilled and adaptable workforce. This PDA builds on existing pathways into the industry by extending the qualification's reach into public health through the Scottish Government's Physical Activity Delivery Plan, A More Active Scotland Delivery Plan and the World Health Organisation's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity.

This PDA aims to generate a network of knowledgeable and skilled practitioners who can draw upon meta-skills to adapt to the needs of their employers, industry (or industries), 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 learners.
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, personal effectiveness.
6. Enable progression in the SCQF including progression to higher education.
7. Provide opportunities for career planning and enhance learners' employment prospects.
8. Develop an individual's meta-skills profile.

Specific aims

1. Develop a sound understanding of the role physical activity plays in contemporary society and the positive impacts on health and wellbeing.
2. Increase awareness of legislative changes and government initiatives in physical activity and public health.
3. Analyse clients' needs, then adapt and modify guidance to motivate a broad range of clients with different needs to positively change their behaviour in different types of environments. This should be done over a period of time sufficient enough to show lifestyle, health, and fitness improvements by providing specialist, tailored advice in their scope of practice.
4. Develop an inclusive, person-centred approach to devise, and appropriately review, an action plan that takes account of functional and other biopsychosocial capabilities and limitations, and level of risk associated with physical activity.
5. Deliver and adapt physical activity and exercise programmes based on an individual assessment of the client. Monitor a client's progress during physical activity and exercise sessions with a knowledge of when to consult with and/or refer to relevant appropriate professionals for specialist information and guidance, or other health and wellbeing services that may contribute to further improvements in their health.
6. Use credible, up-to-date national resources and guidance to inform scope of practice.
7. Develop working practices to the current accepted CIMSPA professional standards for personal trainers.

Who is this qualification for?

This qualification is suitable for learners who want to further develop their knowledge and skills to gain employment in the physical activity and health sector. Learners must hold an industry-relevant gym instructor qualification or equivalent to successfully undertake this PDA qualification. Learners must have one or more of the following:

- HNC Physical Activity and Health
- HNC Fitness, Health and Exercise
- recognised gym instructor qualification

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 and 18 years old may still need to be supervised in the workplace once they have achieved this PDA.

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 PDA.

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 activity and health or related areas
- further study, employment and/or training
- a range of specialisms including:
 - strength and balance and/or postural stability instructor
 - low back pain specialist instructor
 - British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BACPR) cardiac specialist instructor
 - cancer rehabilitation specialist instructor
 - obesity and weight management specialist instructor
 - United Kingdom Strength and Conditioning Association (UKSCA) accredited qualification
 - mental health and/or dementia specialist instructor

Learners who have completed the PDA Personal Training would benefit from having a formally recognised First Aid at Work Qualification.

Professional recognition

CIMSPA Professional Standards in Personal Trainer Practitioner is mapped to the mandatory units:

- Training Principles for Personal Trainers
- Exercise Practitioner 2

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

Transitional arrangements

The PDA Personal Training is a stand-alone qualification.

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 CIMSPA standards.
- Table 3 shows the assessment strategy for the qualification.

Table 1: mapping qualification aims to units

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

General aims

Unit code	Unit title	Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8
J7CB 48	Exercise Practitioner 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J7C6 48	Training Principles for Personal Trainers	X	X	N/A	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
J7CB 48	Exercise Practitioner 2	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X
J7C6 48	Training Principles for Personal Trainers	X	X	N/A	X	N/A	X	X

Table 2: mapping units to CIMSPA standards

The PDA Personal Training has been mapped to the following Professional Standard for Personal Trainer Practitioner from CIMSPA.

1. Anatomy, physiology and kinesiology

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K1.1	Bones	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 2, outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K1.2	Joints	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K1.3	Muscles	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K1.4	Biological systems	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K1.5	Energy systems	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K1.6	Anatomical planes of movement	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	Evidence can be used from HNC through Accreditation of Prior Learning
K1.7	Anatomical terms of location	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	Evidence can be used from HNC through Accreditation of Prior Learning
K1.8	Applied biomechanics and kinesiology	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K1.9	Posture	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 2, outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S1.1	Supporting achievement of clients/physiological goals	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

2. Lifestyle management and client motivation

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K2.1	Lifestyle	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcomes 1 and 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K2.2	Psychological factors influencing behaviour change	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K2.3	Strategies to encourage long-term adherence to positive lifestyle practices	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S1.1	Assess client's readiness to change	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S1.2	Create a positive, motivating and empowering environment to support adherence to exercise	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S1.3	Goal setting	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
S1.4	On-going client support	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

3. Health and wellbeing

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K3.1	Health conditions and medically-controlled diseases	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K3.2	Health screening and risk stratification	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K3.3	Health promotion	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S3.1	Health screening and risk stratification	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
S3.2	Health promotion	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1 Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 1	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

4. Exercise programme design and delivery

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K4.1	Consultations, assessments and reviews	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1, outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K4.2	Goal setting	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1, outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K4.3	Designing and tailoring exercise programmes	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K4.4	Variables	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K4.5	Principles of training	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 4	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K4.6	Exercise modes and training environments	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K4.7	Small group training	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S4.1	Collect and analyse information	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S4.2	Conduct assessments	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S4.3	Programme/session planning and delivery	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1, outcome 2	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
S4.4	Review programme/sessions	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S4.5	Application of exercise science to programme design and delivery.	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

5. Exercise techniques

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K5.1	Fitness training techniques	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 3, outcome 4 Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K5.2	Observe and adapt exercise technique	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
S5.1	Fitness training techniques	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 4 Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S5.2	Observe and adapt exercise technique	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

6. Nutrition

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K6.1	Principles of nutrition	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K6.2	Nutritional strategies	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K6.3	Nutritional assessment tools	Training Principles for Personal Trainers: outcome 1 Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K6.4	Human metabolism	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S6.1	Assessment of nutritional intake	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S6.2	Application of nutritional strategies	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S6.3	Credible sources	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 5	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

7. Information technology

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K7.1	Business operations	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K7.2	Available technology	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K7.3	Ethical and legislative practice	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
S7.1	Incorporating technology	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

8. Professional practice

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K8.1	Conduct	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K8.2	Ethics	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K8.3	Legislation and organisational procedures	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S8.1	Ensure responsibility and professional duty of care to clients	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S8.2	Clarify roles and responsibilities	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

9. Communication

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K9.1	Professionally interact	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K9.2	Communication techniques	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
S9.1	Professionally interact	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 3	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

10. Business acumen

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Unit and associated outcomes	Assessment method	Comments
K10.1	Marketing	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K10.2	Business planning	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	
K10.3	Finance	Exercise Practitioners 2: outcome 6	Portfolio or e-portfolio	

Table 3: Assessment strategy for the PDA

The following information below is provided for general guidance. Please see unit specifications for all evidence requirements.

Unit code	Unit title	Main assessment methods
J7C6 48	Training Principles for Personal Trainers	This unit allows for integration of assessment with Exercise Practitioner 2. The outcomes across both units complement each other, as learners work with a client and develop and deliver a training intervention. Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are open-book. Outcome 5 is closed-book. Learners carry out a range of activities, including project work, restricted-response questions and report writing. They conduct a lifestyle management consultation for a client and develop an action plan to complete a range of health and performance fitness tests, before designing a 12-week training intervention based on their client's goals and objectives. Learners analyse the effects of exercise on the body systems. They critically analyse and apply biomechanical movement effectively during exercise delivery with their client.

Unit code	Unit title	Main assessment methods
J7CB 48	Exercise Practitioner 2	This unit allows for integration of assessment with Training Principles for Personal Trainers. The outcomes across both units complement each other, as learners work with a client and develop and deliver a training intervention. It is an open-book assessment. Learners carry out a range of activities, including project work, restricted-response questions, presentations and report writing. They critically analyse the key components of a healthy lifestyle and look at factors that affect health and wellbeing, which supports the client consultation in Training Principles for Personal Trainers. Learners compare a range of behaviour change theories and approaches to motivate positive behaviour change with clients. When learners have designed their client training intervention, they deliver it in Exercise Practitioner 2. You assess their intervention using an observation checklist and give substantive feedback on the learner's performance. This also helps learners to evaluate their own delivery of the training intervention to support them in becoming a diligent, self-reflective personal trainer. Learners examine the principles of nutrition, nutritional strategies and how to effectively use nutritional assessment tools when working with a client. They construct a business plan and recognise the importance of business acumen, marketing, finance and ethical practices. Your centre can use a range of assessment methods to generate this evidence, and this should be tailored to suit the learner's potential career pathway. You can assess meta-skills and learning for sustainability holistically during delivery of the whole PDA, although these are also assessed as outcomes in this unit. Centres must ensure that all evidence in the learner's portfolio or e-portfolio meets the evidence requirements for the chosen outcome.

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. Where a unit includes the meta-skills outcome, you do not assess learners on their competence of 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 PDA Personal Training

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- focusing:
 - collating and organising client information for training programmes, and health and fitness assessments
 - focusing on the client's needs
 - adapting sessions based on feedback
 - educating clients on components of a healthy lifestyle
 - observing and correcting the client's technique during sessions
 - creating a personal training business plan
- integrity:
 - understanding ethics
 - acting on values and principles
 - work ethic
 - timekeeping
 - reliability
 - discipline
 - trustworthiness when working with clients
 - carrying out a self-assessment of meta-skills and sustainability
- adapting:
 - adjusting teaching styles based on evaluations and client feedback
 - decision-making
 - being responsible
 - responding to changes when working with clients

- initiative:
 - decision making
 - independent thinking
 - self-belief
 - motivation
 - conducting risk assessments when working with clients during the consultation and testing process
 - evaluating sessions
 - assessing own meta-skills development

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- communicating:
 - receiving information from clients
 - giving information
 - listening to others
- feeling:
 - sense of responsibility
 - empathy when working with clients
 - accepting the perspectives of others to understand their feelings and motivations
 - sustainability
- collaborating:
 - operating in different settings
 - building relationships with clients
 - working towards shared goals
 - team-working with other professionals and clients

- leading:
 - inspiring, influencing and motivating others
 - being a role model
 - sustainability

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- curiosity:
 - noticing significant information
 - asking questions
 - information sourcing
 - problem recognition; evaluating sessions and assessing own meta-skills development
- creativity:
 - producing enjoyable programmes and sessions for clients
 - using different nutritional assessment tools with clients
 - responding and adapting to different situations
 - motivating clients in different ways
 - coming up with solutions to problems when working with clients
 - creating a personal training business plan
- sense-making:
 - analysing client information
 - making sense of constant changes when working with clients
 - evaluating sessions
 - assessing own meta-skills development

- critical thinking:
 - problem solving
 - evaluating sessions
 - researching information
 - responding to problems and changing environments
 - assessing risks
 - developing a business plan

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

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.

This PDA is a part of NextGen: HND Physical Activity and Health. Learners should have opportunities to develop:

- a general understanding of sustainability and the SDGs
- an understanding of subject-specific sustainability issues, how these relate to the SDGs, and potential improvements
- the confidence to apply their knowledge and skills in the next stage of their lives

Learners should develop skills, including the ability to:

- 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

Physical activity and the SDGs

Investing in policies to promote walking, cycling, sport, active recreation and play can contribute directly to achieving many of the 2030 SDGs.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030 identifies that investment in policy actions on physical activity have health, social and economic benefits, and directly contribute to achieving:

- SDG 2 (zero hunger)
- SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing)
- SDG 4 (quality education)
- SDG 5 (gender equality)
- SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth)
- SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure)
- SDG 10 (reduced inequalities)
- SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities)
- SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production)
- SDG 13 (climate action)
- SDG 15 (life on land)
- SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions)
- SDG 17 (partnerships)

Resources to support Learning for Sustainability teaching

- [Education Scotland information and resources](#).
- The General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) has launched a [Learning for Sustainability Hub](#), designed to help teachers and lecturers to explore Learning for Sustainability and how it relates to the Professional Standards for Scotland's Teachers and Lecturers.
- GTCS Hub materials include a series of self-directed [Professional Learning modules](#) to explore Learning for Sustainability. The first module introduces Learning for Sustainability and will help you to understand the nature of and context for Learning for Sustainability in Scotland and globally.
- [Learning for Sustainability Scotland](#). Scotland's United Nations University recognised Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.
- [Scottish Government Learning for Sustainability Action Plan](#).
- [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- Global Action Plan On Physical Activity 2018–2030 — [More Active People for a Healthier World](#).

Grading

NextGen PDAs are ungraded.

When delivered as part of the NextGen: HN, PDAs can go towards the grading of the overall qualification.

Approaches to delivery and assessment

All evidence generated by learners must clearly reflect the knowledge and skills identified in the evidence requirements for each outcome. To benefit learners, we recommend that they experience a variety of assessment methods to generate evidence for their portfolio or e-portfolio.

Possible delivery methods include:

- classroom activities
- field trips
- visits and group work
- guest speakers

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/subject-specific qualification equivalent to the CIMSPA Professional Standards embedded within the PDA Personal Training. 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

Exercise Practitioner 2 provides learners with knowledge and practical skills to deliver personal training sessions to groups or individuals. You should emphasise the importance of theoretical knowledge and applied practical skills when learners deliver sessions and evaluate their own practice. Learners also research evidence-based behaviour change theories and factors that affect health and wellbeing.

We recommend that you integrate delivery of both units. Training Principles for Personal Trainers includes gathering client information, such as:

- client screening Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaires (PAR-Qs)
- a client seven-day nutrition diary
- health and performance testing
- planning a 12-week programme
- creating an exercise library
- biomechanics of human movement
- effects of exercise on the body systems

You can use this information as a basis for outcomes 3, 4 and 5, where learners deliver and evaluate the planned programme and analyse the client information collected from the PAR-Q, health and performance testing and seven-day nutrition diary. The learner evidence from both units should form part of a portfolio or e-portfolio.

The unit covers the principles of nutrition, nutritional strategies and nutritional assessment tools that can be used with clients. Learners create a business plan that includes marketing, finance and ethical issues. Learners also develop their own meta-skills in a vocational context and develop sustainability knowledge and understanding, and skills in a vocational context in relation to [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (UN SDGs).

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 both units complement each other, as learners work with a client and develop and deliver a training intervention.

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.

Remediation and re-assessment in Next Generation Professional Development Awards

Remediation

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learners' responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning. If there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements, assessors 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 PDA should mean that the assessor or lecturer is close enough to ongoing assessment activity in learner portfolio 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 PDA Personal Training qualification, we have introduced greater opportunities for holistic and cross assessment in outcomes of the learner portfolio, and therefore expect instances of re-assessment should be minimal. If re-assessment is required within the learner portfolio, learners must be given a re-assessment opportunity, but we recommend this should be undertaken with an alternative client.

Resource requirements

Centres delivering the PDA Personal Training require staff to have relevant, recognised industry qualifications. Delivering staff must have an exercise or fitness-based subject qualification at SCQF level 8 or above, or a relevant industry-recognised qualification.

We strongly recommend that they also have current and/or previous industry experience of delivering personal training sessions in a gym-based or fitness environment. Centres should already have established processes to ensure staff are appropriately qualified to deliver in this subject area.

Learners must have access to a range of gym equipment, including:

- a range of cardiovascular machines
- a range of fixed and/or free weights
- cable machines
- small gym equipment such as mats, medicine balls and skipping ropes

Learners should have access to a suitable space to deliver the personal training sessions, such as a gym, fitness studio, hall or outdoor space. They should also have access to:

- comprehensive library and digital resources
- the UK, National and Local Framework, strategy, and policy documents
- specialist and subject-specific resources, for example original research articles and textbooks

Learners should have access to digital equipment and software applications to support the development of an e-portfolio and other digital artefacts and communication tools, including those required by neurodiverse client groups.

Centres should have appropriate checks in place to ensure health and safety and correct insurance is in place for learners.

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

Information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The units in this PDA 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

PDA Personal Training

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 Professional Development Award (PDA) Personal Training is made up of two units. The PDA is aimed at those who wish to pursue employment in personal training.

The unit Exercise Practitioner 2 enables you to recognise the key components of a healthy lifestyle and factors that affect the health and wellbeing of clients. You learn about evidence-based behaviour change theories and how these can be applied to help motivate clients. You deliver and evaluate a personal training programme with a client or clients. The client or clients come one from the following categories:

- sedentary
- recovering from injury
- over-trained
- high-level performer
- sport-specific performer
- clients with low-risk health conditions

The training sessions include:

- warm up and cooldown
- cardiovascular exercises
- resistance training exercises
- functional exercises
- flexibility exercises

While teaching the personal training sessions, you observe the client and adapt the session and provide feedback to the client based on their technique. You must interact with clients and relevant professionals and use effective communication techniques.

You create a personal training business plan that includes finance, marketing and managing data. You look at different digital technology, including social media and wearable devices, such as activity trackers you could use with clients. You can use nutritional assessment tools, research the principles of nutrition and current evidence-based guidelines to improve client nutritional status. You develop sustainability knowledge and understanding and learn about meta-skills and how to develop your own meta-skills in a vocational context. A large amount of self-study and technique practice is essential to successfully completing the unit.

You must gather evidence in a portfolio that includes research, a logbook of personal training sessions and evaluations, and a business plan. You gather evidence of meta-skills and sustainability and present this evidence in your portfolio. You are assessed using a summative observation checklist while you deliver one of your personal training sessions for a minimum of 45 minutes. The practical sessions can be assessed through a live observation or a recorded submission.

The unit Training Principles for Personal Trainers develops your knowledge and understanding of the planning processes involved in providing personal training support to different client groups. It develops your practical skills as you carry out client consultations and physical assessments with a specified client group.

You further develop your knowledge and apply your skills as you carry out training interventions with clients. You also develop your knowledge and understanding of anatomy, physiology, and applied biomechanics, and how to apply them.

Once you complete the unit, you carry out a comprehensive consultation process with a client, while also providing an analysis of the collected personal information around medical, lifestyle, exercise history and nutritional factors.

You choose appropriate health and performance-based fitness tests that are appropriate to your client's capabilities and link to their goals and the components of fitness chosen to be developed in the training intervention.

After collating your client's information, you show all the necessary knowledge and skills as you apply the training principles and training guidelines to developing a 12-week training programme for an individual or group.

You show your knowledge of planning for a range of fitness exercise techniques by producing an appropriate planning document, covering the following fitness methods:

- cardiovascular exercise, including:
 - steady state
 - interval
 - fartlek
- resistance exercise, for example:
 - a range of training systems
 - exercise equipment
 - fixed and free weight

- functional exercise, for example:
 - movement patterns
 - muscle actions and components of fitness that mirror a client's functional requirements
- flexibility exercise, including:
 - static
 - ballistic
 - dynamic and proprioceptive neuromuscular techniques, including the myotatic reflex, to facilitate increased range of motion

As you teach and/or coach, you critically analyse the biomechanics of human movement (kinesiology) and apply your knowledge effectively during exercise delivery. You also learn to analyse the effects of exercise on the body systems and how to discuss the interaction between exercise prescription and effective application as a personal trainer.

Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are assessed holistically under open-book conditions — for example by an overall unit project. You can gather evidence for these outcomes in a portfolio.

You are assessed in a variety of ways, including closed-book assessments, open-book assignments, portfolio or project work, posters or presentations and practical observations (summative and formative).

When you complete this PDA, you are eligible to join the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) as a qualified personal trainer practitioner. You can progress to employment in the industry, gain entry to additional CPD or industry-relevant qualifications, or move on to degree-level study.

Meta-skills

The table below shows which meta-skills you will develop in this PDA:

Self-management	Social intelligence	Innovation
Focusing	Communicating	Curiosity
Integrity	Feeling	Creativity
Adapting	Collaborating	
Initiative	Leading	

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.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes developing the ability to focus. You sort information into categories and understand the relationship between the various categories of information. You develop your adaptability as you refine your ability to critically reflect on new knowledge and experiences, gaining a deeper understanding and embedding and extending your learning.

Social intelligence

You develop your communication skills by receiving, understanding and processing verbal or written communication. You develop your collaboration skills by applying your knowledge and understanding as you work with clients. You can build relationships when supporting and educating your client. You identify and initiate connections, developing mutual benefit.

Innovation

You develop skills in curiosity, critical thinking and creativity by asking questions, researching, generating ideas, visualising, problem solving, and engaging with and understanding industry practice. You develop your sense-making skills through the process of organising, manipulating, pruning and filtering gathered data into cohesive structures for information-building.

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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