

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Physical Activity for Antenatal and Postnatal Clients (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** J7CP 48  
**SCQF level:** 8 (16 SCQF credit points)  
**Valid from:** session 2024–25

### **Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.0) August 2024**

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

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

The information in this unit specification may be reproduced in support of SQA qualifications only on a non-commercial basis. If it is reproduced, SQA must be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be reproduced for any other purpose, written permission must be obtained from [permissions@sqa.org.uk](mailto:permissions@sqa.org.uk).

This edition: August 2024 (version 2.0)

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2023, 2024

## Unit purpose

This unit provides learners with the current principles, practices, knowledge, skills and confidence to support antenatal and postnatal clients. They learn how to safely and effectively adapt exercises and follow current nutritional advice.

This unit helps learners to identify the physiological and biomechanical adaptations that take place during pregnancy and recovery from pregnancy, and the effect that this has on the design of an exercise session. Learners also recognise the importance of reviewing personal performance and maintaining continuous professional development (CPD).

The unit is suitable for those who are seeking to work with antenatal and postnatal clients in an exercise environment.

## Entry requirements

Learners must have completed one of the following qualifications before undertaking the Professional Development Award (PDA) in Physical Activity for Antenatal and Postnatal Clients:

- ◆ Higher National Certificate (HNC) Physical Activity and Health
- ◆ HNC Fitness, Health and Exercise
- ◆ an industry-recognised fitness qualification, for instance Gym Instructor or Group Exercise Instructor

We recommend that learners have some experience and/or participation in a sport or fitness environment. We recommend that learners undertaking the unit have communication skills to a level equivalent to at least SCQF level 6.

The unit is an optional unit in the Next Generation: Higher National Diploma (HND) in Physical Activity and Health (SCQF level 8) or can be delivered as a stand-alone unit in the PDA in Physical Activity for Antenatal and Postnatal Clients (SCQF level 8).

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 examine the physiological and biomechanical adaptations for antenatal and postnatal clients, and the associated contraindications for physical activity
- 2 critically analyse the importance of antenatal and postnatal nutrition
- 3 outline the key considerations for working with antenatal and postnatal clients participating in physical activity
- 4 design individualised exercise-based sessions for one antenatal and one postnatal client
- 5 recognise the importance of reviewing personal performance and maintaining CPD

## Evidence requirements

Learners can generate evidence through stand-alone assignments or portfolio work in an open-book format.

### **Examine the physiological and biomechanical adaptations for antenatal and postnatal clients, and the associated contraindications for physical activity (outcome 1)**

Learners must:

- ◆ examine the anatomical, physiological and biomechanical changes associated with pregnancy and the postpartum period
- ◆ examine the anatomical, physiological and biomechanical changes that persist post-birth for weeks, months and years after; and interpregnancy
- ◆ examine the benefits of regular engagement with physical activity during pregnancy and the postnatal period in accordance with national and international guidelines
- ◆ examine the types of real and perceived barriers that antenatal and postnatal clients may have to physical activity
- ◆ explain the common antenatal problems relevant to physical activity participation and how to respond to them
- ◆ analyse which contraindications are relative and absolute for pregnancy exercise
- ◆ examine the different considerations that need to be accounted for when planning physical activity sessions for antenatal and postnatal clients

### **Critically analyse the importance of antenatal and postnatal nutrition (outcome 2)**

Learners must:

- ◆ explain the importance of regular nutrition, hydration and dramatic or sudden weight change for antenatal and postnatal clients
- ◆ analyse which foods, drinks and supplements to avoid during pregnancy, and which to limit the intake of, to a minimum, in accordance with evidence

NextGen: HN published prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.0)  
August 2024

- ◆ analyse which foods, drinks and supplements help to support a healthy pregnancy and birth
- ◆ determine the calorie requirements during the three trimesters and the postnatal period, with reference to the different requirements of breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding mothers

### **Outline the key considerations for working with antenatal and postnatal clients participating in physical activity (outcome 3)**

Learners must:

- ◆ interpret information from an antenatal and postnatal client pre-screening questionnaire to inform the design of key considerations in planning of exercise sessions
- ◆ explain how to encourage individuals, within the scope of practice, to be physically active during pregnancy and after childbirth
- ◆ outline the importance of goal setting and regular attendance of physical activity sessions for antenatal and postnatal clients
- ◆ outline how goals for antenatal clients may differ from postnatal clients
- ◆ outline the importance of ensuring the client has had their 6 to 8 week check and has been cleared to participate in physical activity by their GP

### **Design individualised exercise-based sessions for one antenatal and one postnatal client (outcome 4)**

Learners must:

- ◆ conduct a risk assessment that highlights the specific issues or hazards related to each stage of pregnancy and post pregnancy
- ◆ design a minimum of three individualised progressive exercise sessions for:
  - trimester 1
  - trimester 2
  - trimester 3
  - postpartum period

Provide a clear insight-led rationale for each session and activities referring to the recommended (Chief Medical Officer) and international (World Health Organization) physical activity guidelines for antenatal and postnatal clients.

Apply the frequency, intensity, time, type (FITT) principles to the design of each exercise session for each trimester and the postnatal period.

Sessions must include:

- ◆ safe and effective warm up
- ◆ suitable stretches
- ◆ safe and effective main component (including core and pelvic floor exercises)
- ◆ safe and effective cool down

NextGen: HN published prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.0)  
August 2024

Learners must select appropriate types of activity for the client and each stage of pregnancy. Learners should include an explanation of how each exercise and/or activity could be adapted if the client were not able to participate.

### **Recognise the importance of reviewing personal performance and maintaining CPD (outcome 5)**

Learners must:

- ◆ summarise two methods of gathering feedback from clients to promote motivation
- ◆ describe why it is important to reflect on own practice to inform future sessions
- ◆ explain the importance of having an up-to-date first aid qualification when working with antenatal and postnatal clients
- ◆ describe the importance of engaging in regular CPD in antenatal and postnatal specialist areas
- ◆ summarise where to source specific information to enhance practice or engage in further education and/or development

# Knowledge and skills

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

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the terms perinatal, antenatal and postnatal, and the importance of physical activity for those clients</li> <li>◆ the benefits of regular engagement with physical activity during pregnancy and the postnatal period, in accordance with national (UK Chief Medical Officers) and international (World Health Organisation) guidelines</li> <li>◆ the evidence-based benefits of physical activity for pregnant women, to include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— reduction in hypertensive disorders</li> <li>— improved cardiorespiratory fitness</li> <li>— helps to control gestational weight gain</li> <li>— reduction in risk of gestational diabetes</li> <li>— improves mood</li> <li>— improves sleep</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the evidence-based benefits of physical activity for women after childbirth (birth to 12 months), including how it:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— helps to control weight and return to pre-pregnancy weight</li> <li>— improves cardiovascular fitness</li> <li>— improves tummy muscle tone and strength</li> <li>— reduces worry and depression</li> <li>— improves mood</li> <li>— improves sleep</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the terms breech, preterm birth and vaginal birth after caesarean (VBAC)</li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the fundamental anatomical, physiological and biomechanical changes associated with pregnancy and the postnatal period, to include the:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— cardiovascular system</li> <li>— respiratory system</li> <li>— musculoskeletal system</li> <li>— metabolic system</li> <li>— endocrine system</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the anatomical, physiological and biomechanical changes that persist after childbirth</li> <li>◆ the types of real and perceived barriers to physical activity that antenatal and postnatal clients may experience, including but not limited to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— safety concerns</li> <li>— health conditions</li> <li>— musculoskeletal pain</li> <li>— body confidence</li> <li>— accessibility (cost, time and location)</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the myths that are associated with participating in physical activity during and after pregnancy. For example:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— do not lift over your head</li> <li>— eat for two</li> <li>— put your feet up</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the maternal care pathway in the United Kingdom</li> <li>◆ the different types of births to include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— spontaneous vaginal birth</li> <li>— assisted vaginal birth (ventouse and/or forceps)</li> <li>— caesarean section</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the impact of birth experience (including birth trauma, pelvic floor and abdominal wall dysfunctions) on postnatal recovery</li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ common antenatal problems relevant to physical activity participation and how to respond to them, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— posture and balance issues</li> <li>— musculoskeletal pain</li> <li>— fatigue and interrupted sleep patterns</li> <li>— concentration and memory</li> <li>— morning sickness, constipation, bloating</li> <li>— health conditions including gestational diabetes, high blood pressure problems, for example pre-eclampsia</li> <li>— pelvic floor</li> <li>— pregnancy-related pelvic girdle pain and pelvic floor</li> <li>— stress incontinence</li> <li>— abdominal wall dysfunctions, for example separated abdominal muscles (diastasis recti)</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the effects of lactation and considerations when planning an exercise session and/or session for a client who is breastfeeding</li> <li>◆ which contraindications are relative during pregnancy in accordance with recent evidence including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— mild respiratory disorders</li> <li>— mild congenital or acquired heart disease</li> <li>— well-controlled type 1 diabetes</li> <li>— mild pre-eclampsia</li> <li>— preterm premature rupture of membranes (PPROMs)</li> <li>— placenta previa after 28 days</li> <li>— untreated thyroid disease</li> <li>— symptomatic, severe eating disorder</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	



Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1 (continued)</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— multiple nutrient deficiencies and/or chronic undernutrition</li> <li>— moderate to heavy smoking (more than 20 cigarettes per day) in the presence of comorbidities</li> <li>◆ which contraindications are absolute during pregnancy in accordance with recent evidence, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— severe respiratory diseases (for example chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, restrictive lung disease and cystic fibrosis)</li> <li>— severe acquired or congenital heart disease with exercise intolerance</li> <li>— uncontrolled or severe arrhythmia</li> <li>— placental abruption</li> <li>— vasa previa</li> <li>— uncontrolled type 1 diabetes</li> <li>— intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR)</li> <li>— active preterm labour</li> <li>— severe pre-eclampsia</li> <li>— cervical insufficiency</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the signs and symptoms of pelvic floor and abdominal wall dysfunction and acknowledge that if any of these factors are present, high intensity activity should not resume and referral to a pelvic health physiotherapist is warranted. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— urinary and/or faecal incontinence</li> <li>— urinary and/or faecal urgency that is difficult to defer</li> <li>— heaviness, pressure, bulge and/or dragging in the pelvic area</li> <li>— pain with intercourse</li> <li>— obstructive defecation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1 (continued)</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— pendulous abdomen, separated abdominal muscles and/or decreased abdominal strength and function</li> <li>— musculoskeletal lumbopelvic pain</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the importance of nutrition for prenatal clients</li> <li>◆ the importance of nutrition for postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ the importance of nutrition, hydration and dramatic or sudden weight change</li> <li>◆ have an awareness of which foods, drinks and supplements help to support a healthy pregnancy and birth</li> <li>◆ have an awareness of the calorie requirements during the three trimesters of pregnancy and the postnatal period, with reference to the different requirements of breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding mothers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the importance of pre-activity screening</li> <li>◆ the appropriate and up-to-date screening tools to employ, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Get Active questionnaire for pregnancy — UK version</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 3 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the importance of the 6 to 8-week postnatal check by a healthcare professional as an opportunity to discuss physical and mental wellbeing</li> <li>◆ how to respond to an individual who has experienced fertility problems and baby loss (miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant death) whilst acknowledging that individuals may not wish to disclose this information</li> <li>◆ when it might not be appropriate to take on a client and when to refer a client to a healthcare professional or more suitably qualified exercise professional (for example, a clinical exercise specialist)</li> <li>◆ appropriate and up-to-date initiatives and campaigns to promote physical activity and engage antenatal and postnatal clients. Examples include but are not limited to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— This Mum Moves</li> <li>— The Active Pregnancy Foundation</li> <li>— Couch to Fitness — Prenatal Programme</li> <li>— Couch to Fitness — Postnatal Programme</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ how to respond if a client shows signs or symptoms that their mental health has been impacted and where to signpost them to</li> <li>◆ in which special circumstances, in line with occupational scope and where appropriate, it would be best practice to obtain written consent from a client’s healthcare provider or providers</li> <li>◆ when it is necessary to signpost or refer to a healthcare professional or service or more suitably qualified exercise professionals (for example, a clinical exercise specialist)</li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 3 (continued)</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the benefits of working with other services to support the client</li> <li>◆ the appropriate professional and/or support service to signpost or refer to when contraindications are identified, or concerns relate to issues beyond the occupational scope of practice</li> <li>◆ the importance of goal setting and regular attendance of physical activity sessions for antenatal and postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ how goals for antenatal and postnatal clients may differ from those of the general population</li> <li>◆ the importance of patient confidentiality and general data protection regulation (GDPR)</li> <li>◆ the importance of dealing with sensitive information that may be emotive for the client</li> <li>◆ the circumstances in which information may need to be exchanged with a healthcare or qualified exercise professional and how to obtain consent from antenatal and postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ the key areas to ask when pre-screening an antenatal client, to include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— activity levels: type, amount and intensity of activities engaged in (pre-pregnancy and currently)</li> <li>— estimated date of birth</li> <li>— multiple pregnancy</li> <li>— previous pregnancy history, including miscarriage, early delivery or other complications</li> <li>— medication</li> <li>— contraindicators</li> <li>— medical contacts (emergency contact or midwife contact)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 3 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the key areas to ask when pre-screening a postnatal client, to include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— activity levels: type, amount and intensity of activities engaged in (during pregnancy and currently)</li> <li>— whether they have had a 6 to 8-week postnatal check with a healthcare professional</li> <li>— guidance or information advised by a specialist</li> <li>— type of birth</li> <li>— birth trauma and complications</li> <li>— postnatal bleeding (lochia)</li> <li>— signs and symptoms of abdominal wall and/or pelvic floor dysfunction</li> <li>— lactation</li> <li>— pelvic girdle and back pain</li> <li>— general wellbeing (including psychological)</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the importance of a disclaimer where activities are delivered online (live or recorded) and when screening is not always possible face-to-face</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the importance of tailoring activities to the needs of antenatal and postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ how to plan safe physical activity programmes and/or sessions for antenatal and postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ how to plan engaging physical activity programmes and/or sessions for antenatal and postnatal clients</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ show a clear insight and an evidence-based rationale for the session and activities used in the plan</li> <li>◆ develop a plan for a physical activity session that is safe and engaging, for antenatal and postnatal client or clients</li> <li>◆ demonstrate the ability to adapt a physical activity plan that is specific to a client</li> </ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 4 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ how to plan safe and effective adaptations or modifications, and alternative activities, for antenatal and postnatal clients within scope of occupational practice</li> <li>◆ the types of activities that they should avoid and the reasons for this based on current evidence and guidelines. Activities to avoid could include, but are not limited to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— contact sports (for example ice hockey, martial arts, rugby)</li> <li>— activities with a high risk of falling (for example downhill snow skiing, water skiing, surfing, off-road cycling, gymnastics, horse riding)</li> <li>— scuba diving</li> <li>— sky diving</li> <li>— hot yoga or hot pilates</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the different considerations that need to be accounted for when planning physical activity sessions for antenatal and postnatal clients including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— avoiding hot and humid conditions, where appropriate</li> <li>— regular hydration</li> <li>— balanced nutrition</li> <li>— appropriate clothing and footwear</li> <li>— lactation</li> <li>— type of births and stage of recovery</li> <li>— adaptation of exercises (modification)</li> <li>— using the correct technique</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the importance of correct technique and regression of the activities</li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 4 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the recommended national (CMO) and international (WHO) physical activity guidelines for antenatal and postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ why the guidelines are in place and the importance of keeping up to date with evidence-based research and guidelines</li> <li>◆ the key implications of the effects of pregnancy on programming, to include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— consideration of altered biomechanics, including a shift in gravity and postural imbalance</li> <li>— current physical activity levels</li> <li>— implications of performing exercises in the supine position after the first trimester — advise on time spent in this position and potential risk for long durations</li> <li>— the need to re-educate the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles after childbirth</li> <li>— awareness of pelvic floor and abdominal wall dysfunctions and referral to an appropriately qualified professional as indicated</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the importance of the relationship between programme design and activity delivery in engaging antenatal and postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ the importance of adapting physical activity sessions and/or programmes within a one-to-one or group setting, to meet the need of the individual client</li> </ul>	

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 4 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ how to deliver inclusive, safe and engaging physical activity sessions for antenatal clients, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— appropriate exercise selection</li> <li>— taking into consideration the stage of pregnancy</li> <li>— equipment</li> <li>— exercise position</li> <li>— timings</li> <li>— alternatives or adaptations specific to each stage of pregnancy, based on the physiological and biomechanical changes taking place</li> <li>— appropriate methods of checking intensity</li> <li>— the inclusion of core and functional exercises</li> <li>— the importance of pelvic floor exercises for prenatal and postnatal clients</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ how to record and arrange each programme in a format that is easy for a client to understand</li> <li>◆ the importance of reviewing your analysis of the client’s level of development and motivation to inform goal setting and session outcomes</li> <li>◆ how to assess and manage the risks to antenatal and postnatal clients prior, during and post physical activity</li> <li>◆ the importance of dynamic risk assessment of activities, including when babies are present</li> <li>◆ the potential warning signs when it may be necessary for a client to withdraw from physical activity programme or session</li> </ul>	



Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 4 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the warning signs of when to stop an activity, what to do, and where to refer a client to. Warning signs to stop an activity include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— vaginal bleeding</li> <li>— abdominal pain</li> <li>— regular and painful contractions</li> <li>— amniotic fluid leakage</li> <li>— dyspnoea before exertion</li> <li>— persistent excessive shortness of breath that does not resolve with rest</li> <li>— persistent dizziness or faintness that does not resolve on rest</li> <li>— headache</li> <li>— chest pain</li> <li>— muscle weakness affecting balance</li> <li>— calf pain or swelling</li> <li>— severe pelvic girdle pain that does not improve within a week or two, or interferes with normal day-to-day living</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ the importance of safe functional transitions between activities, both within a physical activity setting and everyday activities, for example getting in and out of the car</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Outcome 5</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ opportunities to collate and use feedback from their clients regarding the activities delivered</li> <li>◆ how to use feedback from clients to improve engagement and adherence</li> <li>◆ how to reflect on own practice to inform future sessions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 5</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ evaluate inclusive, safe and fun physical activity sessions that promote the individual returning to physical activity after childbirth</li> </ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 5 (continued)</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the importance of having an up-to-date first aid qualification when working with antenatal and postnatal clients</li> <li>◆ the importance of checking insurance arrangements where babies are present in the facility or environment where physical activity sessions are delivered</li> <li>◆ the importance of informing insurance companies of the specialist qualification and to include cover of this population under existing policy</li> <li>◆ the importance of working within the remit of the specific role carried out, appropriate to the occupation scope of practice</li> <li>◆ the importance of regularly reviewing and staying up to date with current evidence and guidance</li> <li>◆ the importance of engaging in regular CPD activities relevant to the scope of practice</li> <li>◆ where to source specific information to enhance practice or engage in further education and/or development</li> </ul>	

## Meta-skills

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

### Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: sorting information for client antenatal and postnatal programmes; focusing on the client's needs; adapting sessions based on feedback; educating clients on components of a healthy lifestyle; observing and correcting client's technique during sessions — in outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ integrity: understanding ethical approaches and acting on values and principles; work ethic; timekeeping; reliability; discipline; trustworthiness when working with clients in outcomes; assessing own meta-skills development — in outcomes 3 and 5
- ◆ adapting: adapting teaching styles; decision-making; being responsible; responding to changes when working with clients; reviewing programmes based on evaluations and client feedback — in outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ initiative: decision-making; independent thinking; self-belief; motivation; responsibility when risk assessing and when working with clients in outcomes; evaluating sessions; assessing own meta-skills development — in outcomes 3, 4 and 5

### Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

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

### Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: noticing significant information; asking questions; information sourcing; problem recognition; evaluating sessions; assessing own meta-skills development — in outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ creativity: creating enjoyable programmes and sessions for clients; using different screening tools with clients; responding to different situations and adapting; motivating

clients in different ways; coming up with solutions to problems when working with clients — in outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

- ◆ sense-making: analysing client information; analysing client's programme data; making sense of constant changes when working with clients in outcomes; evaluating sessions; assessing own meta-skills development — in outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- ◆ critical thinking: problem solving; evaluating sessions; researching information; responding to problems and changing environments; assessing risks — in outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

## **Delivery of unit**

This unit is 2 SQA credits and 16 SCQF credits at SCQF level 8.

We recommend 80 hours contact time, and 80 hours of self-directed learning.

We recommend that assessors hold a relevant prenatal and postnatal qualification to support delivery of the unit.

We encourage your centre to regularly check and use materials from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (ACOG) and the World Health Organization (WHO) when delivering the unit.

## **Professional recognition**

Learners who complete the PDA in Working with Antenatal and Postnatal Clients as part of the HND in Physical Activity and Health or as a stand-alone professional development unit (PDA), can gain professional recognition with the Chartered Institute of Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) for the Professional Standard: Population Specialism — Working with Antenatal and Postnatal Clients.

## Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

The PDA in Physical Activity Antenatal and Postnatal Clients provides learners with knowledge and practical skills to deliver support to antenatal and postnatal individuals and groups. You should emphasise to learners the importance of both theoretical knowledge and applied practical skills in relation to when they deliver exercise sessions and evaluate their own practice.

In outcomes 1 and 2, learners can design an information leaflet that informs the client of the stages of pregnancy, and how exercise benefits the client — including the nutritional requirements of each trimester of the pregnancy and postnatal period.

In outcomes 3 and 4, learners create 12 sessions to support each stage of the pregnancy, including a postnatal programme that demonstrates their knowledge of the biomechanical and physiological changes, and how exercise programmes and exercises should be adapted.

Learners must complete a risk assessment that covers each stage of pregnancy and post pregnancy. They should consider the type of exercise, equipment, environment, and physiological and biomechanical changes in their risk assessment.

In outcome 5, learners recognise the importance of CPD when working with antenatal and postnatal clients; and ways they can gather feedback from clients and use this information to develop and reflect on their professional practice.

Throughout the unit learners evaluate and develop a range of meta-skills. You can assess these through a number of formative assessment approaches, such as open-book assessment and portfolio work.

On completion of the unit, learners can look to progress on to other PDA awards such as:

- ◆ PDA Working Inclusively with Participants with Disabilities
- ◆ PDA in Sport and Physical Activity for Children

## Resources

Your centre must have:

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

Although the unit does not require learners to be observed or demonstrate exercises, we recommend that they are taught in a practical environment.

## **Approaches to assessment**

The unit is divided into five outcomes with various assessment methods to generate evidence, for example:

- ◆ open-book assessment
- ◆ portfolio work that analyses client information
- ◆ creating exercise sessions
- ◆ creating a risk assessment

The evidence forms part of a project. Learners gather this in a portfolio. We strongly advise that learners use the case study that your centre has developed to complete outcomes 3 and 4.

All written work should contain a declaration of validity that the content is the learner's own work, unless cited otherwise. Learners should sign and date their submissions. We encourage digital submissions through your centres' virtual learning environment (VLE) using anti-plagiarism software.

### **Examine the physiological and biomechanical adaptations for antenatal and postnatal clients, and the associated contraindications for physical activity (outcome 1)**

You can assess outcome 1 using a range of assessment methods. Learners can design an infographic (or other type of media) that analyses the physiological and biomechanical adaptations within the body for antenatal and postnatal clients. You can assess part of outcome 1 with the evidence criteria for outcome 2 within the one infographic (or alternative media source). Learners should professionally present the infographic, and it should not have any grammar or spelling errors.

You can assess the associated contraindications for participation in physical activity using an open-book extended-response assessment.

### **Critically analyse the importance of antenatal and postnatal nutrition (outcome 2)**

You can assess outcome 2 using a range of assessment methods. Learners can design an infographic or other type of media that analyses the importance of antenatal and postnatal nutrition. You can assess part of outcome 2 with the evidence criteria for outcome 1 within the one infographic (or alternative media source). Learners should professionally present the infographic, and it should not have any grammar or spelling errors.

### **Outline the key considerations for working with antenatal and postnatal clients participating in physical activity (outcome 3)**

We advise that your centre creates a case study that has the relevant information to allow learners to successfully analyse an antenatal and postnatal client. Your centre should include a completed pregnancy health questionnaire for a client who is currently in each trimester of their pregnancy and has no health complications. Learners analyse the client's health, pregnancy, goals (antenatal and postnatal); and how to encourage the client to attend



physical activity sessions. Learners should include a brief rationale to justify why the client is safe to exercise, based on the information gathered and outlined in the case study, including a statement referring to when the client would be able to participate in physical activity in the postnatal phase. You can assess outcome 3 with the evidence criteria for outcome 4.

### **Design individualised exercise-based sessions for one antenatal and one postnatal client (outcome 4)**

Learners design 12 exercise session plans, three for each trimester of pregnancy and three for the postnatal period. Learners should refer to the information they analysed from outcome 3 to help with their design and planning of the exercise sessions. They must also follow exercise guidance for antenatal and postnatal clients.

Learners should design exercise sessions that last a minimum of 45 minutes for each of the three trimesters and postnatal period. Each exercise session plan should apply the principles of FITT and include:

- ◆ an effective warm up
- ◆ a safe and effective main component that includes core and pelvic floor exercises
- ◆ an effective cool down that includes post-workout stretch

When designing each exercise session, learners must pay attention to:

- ◆ appropriate exercise selection
- ◆ the stage of pregnancy
- ◆ equipment
- ◆ exercise position
- ◆ timings
- ◆ alternatives or adaptations specific to each stage of pregnancy based on the physiological and biomechanical changes taking place
- ◆ appropriate methods of checking intensity
- ◆ the inclusion of core and functional exercises
- ◆ the importance of pelvic floor exercises for prenatal and postnatal clients
- ◆ how to record and arrange each exercise session in a format that is easy for a client to understand

Learners should explain the main differences between each of the 12 sessions and explain the rationale behind the adaptations for each trimester. Learners should complete a suitable risk assessment for each stage of pregnancy, including postnatal. The risk assessment can include the type of exercise, equipment, environment, and physiological and biomechanical changes. You can assess outcome 4 with the evidence criteria for outcome 3.

### **Recognise the importance of reviewing personal performance and maintaining CPD (outcome 5)**

You should assess this outcome using an open-book extended-response assessment, ensuring you cover all evidence criteria. Your centre can collect evidence in an alternative way or can assess holistically with another unit.

## **Equality and inclusion**

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

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

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

[www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## Information for learners

### PDA in Physical Activity for Antenatal and Postnatal Clients (SCQF level 8)

This information explains:

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

### Unit information

This unit enables you to develop an understanding of the principles and practices of working with antenatal and postnatal clients within a physical activity and/or exercise setting. The unit provides you with the current knowledge, skills and confidence you need to support antenatal and postnatal clients with safe and effective exercise, adaptations and recommended nutritional advice. You can identify the physiological and biomechanical adaptations that take place during pregnancy and recovery from pregnancy, and the effect these have on the design of an exercise session.

During the unit you design an information leaflet that informs the client of the stages of pregnancy, how exercise benefits the client, including the nutritional requirements of each trimester of the pregnancy and postnatal period. You also create 12 sessions to support each stage of the pregnancy, including a postnatal exercise session that demonstrates your knowledge of the biomechanical and physiological changes, and how exercise sessions and exercises should be adapted. You complete a risk assessment that covers each stage of pregnancy and post pregnancy, that considers the type of exercise, equipment, environment, and physiological and biomechanical changes. You also recognise the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) when working with antenatal and postnatal clients, and recognise ways in which you can gather feedback from clients and use this information to develop and reflect on your professional practice.

You are assessed through a number of formative assessment approaches, such as open-book assessment and portfolio work.

### Meta-skills

Throughout the unit you evaluate and develop a range of meta-skills. Meta-skills include self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

### Self-management

This meta-skill includes developing the ability to focus and improve your initiative. You organise information for both antenatal and postnatal clients and use this to meet their needs. You develop adaptability when you reflect on feedback and educate clients to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. You develop integrity by comprehending ethical approaches and

develop a keen awareness of acting in accordance with your values and principles. This informs your practice as you move into employment and/or further study.

### **Social intelligence**

This includes developing your level of communication through the ability to receive, understand and process verbal or written communication. Application of unit knowledge and understanding in client work develops the meta-skill of collaboration. You build relationships when supporting and educating your client. You identify and initiate connections, developing mutual benefit. You also develop your leadership skills as you work with clients towards their goals and objectives.

### **Innovation**

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

On successful completion of the PDA in Working with Antenatal and Postnatal Clients as part of the HND in Physical Activity and Health or as a stand-alone professional development unit (PDA), you can gain professional recognition with the Chartered Institute of Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) for the Professional Standard: Population Specialism — Working with Antenatal and Postnatal Clients.

# Administrative information

---

**Published:** August 2024 (version 2.0)

**Superclass:** HF

---

## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Updated 'Entry requirements' for learners undertaking the unit as a stand-alone PDA.</li><li>◆ Amended wording for CIMSPA Professional Standards Recognition.</li></ul>	June 2024

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