

Professional and vocational qualifications considered essential or desirable for the sport and exercise scientist

Kelly Goodwin provides some advice on increasing employability.

Sport and exercise science degrees are multidisciplinary in nature providing a variety of employment opportunities. To increase employability, it is often vital to complete vocational training as an adjunct to a degree. Supplementary qualifications provide additional layers of skill and knowledge which differentiate individual applications in a competitive labour market.

Below is a selection of courses informed by the BASES Specialist Interest Groups. Due to the cost implications, students should consider the career they would ultimately like to work in and select training as appropriate. Courses have been themed; however some are appropriate across many themes. For example, the ISAK Level One is considered valuable for those who work in the clinical exercise field, as an exercise physiologist in a football club or as an additional skill set for a personal trainer. The courses are not mutually exclusive and the mix of qualifications would depend upon an individual's career aspirations.

Health and safety training (H&S)

Depending on the career direction individuals may need additional H&S training regarding specific hazards and how associated risks can be controlled. Consider, does the law require you to do specific training for a specific profession, i.e., first aid or phlebotomy training? For further advice, see the National Occupational Standards (www.ukstandards.co.uk), www.gov.uk for advice on skills and training and if in-house training is not sufficient visit www.oshcr.org to find an external consultant.

- **First aid certificate** - A first aid certificate is a legal requirement for the work place. Some courses cover the practical skills needed by the sports first aider instilling confidence to deal with not only lifesaving but also the management of common sports injury situations. These courses are useful for the pitch side first aider.
- **Manual handling certificate** - Employers are required to manage the risks associated with lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing and pulling equipment etc. by ensuring staff have appropriately training in this area.
- **Personal and public liability insurance** - If working with members of the public, public liability insurance for protection against third party claims is important. Suitable policies are provided by REPs, sports coach UK, the Association for Physical Education (AFPE) and BALENS Specialist Insurance Brokers.
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** - The DBS carries out criminal record checks for specific positions, professions, employment, offices, works and licences included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Individuals cannot apply for a check directly. However, a DBS certificate is required if working with children and if required will be requested as part of an organisation's pre-recruitment checks following an offer of employment.

Working in the coaching environment

All coaches should meet the minimum standards for active coaches as set out by Sports Coach UK www.sportscoachuk.org/sites/default/files/MSD-guidance-tool-1-2.pdf and would need a DBS certificate if working with children.

Recommended sports coach UK workshops:

1. **Equity in your coaching** - Course content covers the changing face of equality legislation relevant to the national equality agenda including an understanding of age, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, disability and gender.
2. **Safeguarding and protecting children** - Course content covers the different responsibilities when caring for children as well as developing confidence about the appropriate actions to take should concerns be raised.
3. **An introduction to FUNDamentals in movement** - Course content maps the fundamentals of movement across the National Curriculum focusing on the stages of long-term athlete development and the importance of play, fun and enjoyment in sport. Practical ideas and advice about the application of the principles of agility, balance and co-ordination are included.
4. **What is talent?** - This is the first workshop in the Talent Foundation Series and is suitable for aspiring high-performing coaches with an interest in talent development, working, or having a desire to work with emerging athletes within the England Talent Pathway.

- **The 1st4Sport (QCF) Level 3 Certificate in Talented Athlete Lifestyle Support (TALS)** - Developed in partnership with TASS. Course content introduces the principles of supporting, advising and mentoring talented athletes in managing their personal development and lifestyle. Prerequisite qualifications include a recognised Children Protection workshop, to have passed the UK Anti-Doping online workshop and to have access to an appropriate talented athlete over a minimum of a three-month period. Individuals without this access are still encouraged to apply.

- **Level 2 coaching award** - In order to be a lead coach a minimum of a level two coaching award in any sport is required. With a level one coaching award, supervision will still be required.

Strength and conditioning coach (S&C)

Certified strength and conditioning specialist (CSCS) - The CSCS qualification enables the learner to design and implement safe and effective strength training and conditioning programmes and to provide guidance regarding nutrition and injury prevention. Visit: www.nasca.com/CSCS_Certification_2/

UKSCA accreditation - The UKSCA set the professional standards for strength and conditioning coaches in the UK. If you are looking for a career in this area most sport employers now stipulate ASCC accreditation as a job requirement. Visit: www.ukzca.org.uk/ukzca/common/about.asp?txtID=becomeaccredited

Working with clinical populations

For those wishing to pursue a career with a clinical focus consider in the first instance the BASES guide to employing sport and exercise graduates in the NHS and Public Health sector: www.bases.org.uk/write/Documents/NHS_LEAFLET_FINAL.pdf

- **The International Society for the Advancement of Kinanthropometry (ISAK)** - Level one teaches basic anthropometric measurements and skinfolds. Knowledge of percent body fat (%BF) is useful in health and fitness assessments and in predicting athletic performance. This course teaches how to land mark which is essential to help improve the validity and reliability of recorded measures.

- **Phlebotomy and cannulation certificate** - To test for haematological measures a Phlebotomy certificate is recommended to ensure understanding of and adherence to the proper protocols, procedures and codes of practice associated with taking human blood. An understanding of the policies for infection control, health and safety related to the task of phlebotomy and cannulation will almost always be required for ethical clearance.

- **GP exercise referral** - This course is suitable for fitness professionals who wish to work alongside a doctor and train medically referred individuals with a variety of medical conditions. The Level 3 Diploma allows for registration with the Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) at level 3. Check with the course provider which pre-requisite qualifications are required. This course is the pre-requisite for level 4 qualifications including the Certificate in Obesity and Diabetes Management and the Certificate in Low Back Pain Management. Again, check with the various course providers which pre-requisite qualifications are required.

- **Obesity and diabetes management** - The Level 4 Diploma qualification looks at obesity and diabetes and enables the holder to prescribe, plan, conduct and review programmes to address the needs of clients allowing for the implementation of a corrective diet to aid in the management of these conditions.

- **Low back pain specialist** - A Level 4 Diploma which will allow the holder to work with clients with low back pain and to design and deliver exercise programmes to improve the health and well-being and to help alleviate these conditions. A level 4 Diploma as an obesity, diabetes or back pain specialist will allow entry at Level 4 onto REPs.

- **Corrective exercise specialist** - A qualification developed in response to the growing need for professionals to assist clients experiencing musculoskeletal imbalances requiring postural correction.

- **Cardiac rehab phase IV** - This qualification enables the holder to work with and help re-habilitate patients who have had a heart attack including those who have undergone heart surgery or previously suffered from or are suffering with any type of heart disease.

- **NHS scientist training programme (STP)** - For those highly committed to exploring clinical scientist training pathways consider the NHS STP. A very competitive graduate entry programme which leads to a more senior scientist role and to a specifically commissioned and accredited master's degree and certification of achievement of work-based training. A vast amount of preparation is required and places are limited. To find out how to prepare for such a career pathway visit: www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/healthcare-science/education-and-training/nhs-scientist-training-programme-%28stp%29/

- **Skills Active Level 4 qualifications** - It is highly desirable for graduates wishing to work with clinical populations that they attain Skills Active Level 4 qualifications, which combined with

their degree will allow individuals to apply for BASES Certified Practitioner status.

Personal training

- **Level 2 gym instructor** - This qualification is often viewed as the starting point for a career in the fitness industry and allows progression onto the Level 3 Personal Trainer qualification. Having the ability to teach the resistance based exercises considered standard for the major muscle groups of the body is invaluable for many sport and exercise scientists.

- **Level 3 personal trainer** - Advancing the knowledge from the Level 2, this qualification would enable an individual to work as a self-employed basis as a Personal Trainer specialist if so desired and allows entry at Level 3 onto REPs.

Performance analysis

- **Dartfish learning technologist course** - Levels of accreditation are available (1-5) through the International Society of Performance Analysis of Sport (ISPAS). Dartfish is a comprehensive match analysis system which allows key sequences and/or moments to be found, reviewed and analysed.

- **BASES biomechanics workshop: The application to practice** - January / February 2015 - how biomechanics can inform the coaching process, skill and technique selection, strength and conditioning and training theory. Visit: www.bases.org.uk/Workshops/Biomechanics-The-Application-to-Practice/21343

Membership organisations

- American Colleges of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
- British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BACPR)
- British Association for Sport and Exercise Medicine (BASEM)
- British Association of Sport and Exercise Science (BASES)
- European College Sport Science (ECSS)
- European Society of Biomechanics (ESB)
- International Society of Biomechanics (ISB)
- International Society of Biomechanics in Sport (ISBS)
- International Society of Engineering in Sport (ISEA)
- International Society of Performance Analysis of Sport (ISPAS)
- International Society of Sport Nutrition (ISSN)
- National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM)
- National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA)
- Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)
- The Physiological Society
- United Kingdom Strength and Conditioning Association (UKSCA).

For those graduating shortly, consider the Supervised Experience/Accreditation/Certified Exercise Practitioner schemes offered by BASES. For all, consider engaging with the webinar series.

Visit REPs <http://www.exerciseregister.org/> and the ACSM <http://hfigroup.com/training/> for information about additional courses that are available. ■



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