

Gym Instructor Qualification Standards

Content covered in the Gym Instructor qualification

These standards describe the competence required to instruct gym sessions. The Gym Instructor qualification requires 150 hours of Guided Learning Hours (GLH) which must include 3 days' practical face-to-face tuition.

Wherever the term 'standards' is used in this document, this means skills (or occupational) standards, not any other types of standards that may be used in the health and fitness industry for club certification or other purposes.

Click on the link below to take you to each unit.

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[Gym Exercise – Equipment and Training Specification](#)

The unit code given in brackets refers to the ICREPs Global Standards.

Unit 1 (A1) Conduct health screening and assess client exercise preferences, barriers and goals

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered in full to the learners:

- Conduct health screening
- Agree fitness activities with clients

Knowledge to be covered

Conduct health screening

1. How to establish a rapport with clients, taking account gender, age and social class. Show sensitivity and empathy to clients and the information they provide, ensure clients understands the reasons for collecting information and how you will use it, ensure you maintain professional boundaries and refer if needed to another health professional.
2. Consider how to collect the required information, including using interviews and questionnaires, making observations and taking physical measurements, including the principles of informed consent
3. How to collect clients' health screening information and how to use health screening effectively (follow correct protocol for screening, ensure correct storage and disposal of information, ensure privacy and any legal or ethical and cultural considerations are met) to obtain information such as:
 - lifestyle evaluation
 - current fitness profile
 - time availability
 - exercise and training history
 - exercise preferences
 - exercise contraindications
 - specific fitness goals
 - identify clients' needs and potential
 - identify any possible risks from participation in a gym programme and plan how to minimise them
 - medical history
 - medications
 - informed consent
 - current fitness (could include fitness testing using correct protocols)
 - clearance letter from an allied health professional or medical practitioner if needed.
4. Follow legal and ethical requirements for the security and confidentiality of client information
5. Consider the factors, based on client screening, which may affect safe exercise participation, know how to identify and agree goals and objectives for a programme based on collected information and consider reasons for temporary deferral of exercise and referral to other professionals.
6. Analyse and interpret all the information collated regarding the client, identify any contraindications to them participating in exercise

Agree fitness activities with clients

7. Provide relevant information on the benefits of exercise and the impact of poor lifestyle behaviours on health and fitness to clients

8.	Establish the physical, psychological and social reasons for clients' participation in an exercise program, help clients to identify barriers to adherence and how to overcome them.
9.	Identify the joint movements and muscles that client needs to target or strengthen based on the screening information collected.
10.	Work with clients to agree goals to include short, medium and long-term goals appropriate to their needs, ensure you manage their expectations regarding these goals
11.	Identify potential barriers to clients achieving their goals and discuss possible solutions to these barriers and to prevent drop out or relapse
12.	Identify clients' fitness requirements and provide clear information about appropriate exercise programmes to help them meet their goals, discuss the benefits of a range of suitable activities for them.

Unit 2 (B1) Apply principles of anatomy and physiology in a fitness context

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered and assessed in full:

- Anatomical and physiological terminology
- Be able to apply anatomy and physiology knowledge to exercise planning and instruction
- Apply knowledge of the body's systems to exercise planning and instruction

Knowledge to be covered

Anatomical and physiological terminology

1. Anatomical and physiological terminology and describe and demonstrate movements of the body to clients

Be able to apply anatomy and physiology knowledge to exercise planning and instruction

2. Be able to apply anatomy and physiology knowledge to exercise planning and instruction to include:

a. the structure and function of the skeletal system

- basic functions of the skeleton
- structures of the axial skeleton
- structures of the appendicular skeleton
- classification of bones
- structure of long bone
- stages of bone growth
- potential ranges of motion of the spine

b. the structure and function of Joints in the skeleton

- classification of joints,
- structure of synovial joints
- types of synovial joints and their range of motion
- joint movement potential and joint actions

c. The structure and function of the circulatory system

- location, function and structure of the heart
- how blood moves through the four chambers of the heart
- heart rates, stroke volume and cardiac output
- systemic and pulmonary circulation
- the structure and functions of blood vessels
- blood pressure
- blood pressure classifications

<p>d. The structure and function of the respiratory system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location, function and structure of the lungs • main muscles involved in breathing • passage of air through the respiratory tract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ process of gaseous exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the lungs • the structure and function of the cardiovascular system <p>e. The structure and function of the muscular system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the three types of muscle tissue • the characteristics and functions of the three types of muscle tissue • the basic structure of skeletal muscle • names and locations the skeletal muscles • structure and function of the pelvic floor muscles • different types of muscle action • joint actions brought about by specific muscle group contractions • skeletal muscle fibre types and their characteristics <p>f. The structure and function of the nervous system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role and functions of the nervous system • principles of muscle contraction • 'all or none law'/motor unit recruitment • how physical activity can enhance neuromuscular connections and improve motor fitness 	
<p>Apply knowledge of the body's systems to exercise planning and instruction</p>	
3.	<p>Apply knowledge of the body's systems to exercise planning and instruction, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consideration of joint type and risk of injury • structure of muscles and the process of contraction
4.	<p>Be able to analyse which joints and muscles are being utilised in an exercise and their role in the movement.</p>
5.	<p>Know and apply correct postural alignment for exercises to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the curves of the spine • neutral spine alignment • postural deviations to include kyphosis, lordosis, scoliosis and the effect of pregnancy
6.	<p>The body's energy systems and how they work at different exercise intensities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how carbohydrates, fats and proteins are used in the production of energy/adenosine triphosphate • the use of the three energy systems during aerobic and anaerobic activity
7.	<p>The immediate physiological responses and physiological adaptations of the body's systems to exercise, for example the heart rate increasing as the client begins their warm up on the bike.</p>
8.	<p>The effects of starting, continuing and stopping, different types of training, described in terms of their physiological responses for example increase in heart rate, releases of hormones, neuromuscular activation, changes to breathing rate.</p>

Unit 3 (D1) Provide motivation and support as part of exercise instruction

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered and assessed in full:

- Assist clients to develop motivational strategies
- Support client motivation

Knowledge to be covered

Assist clients to develop motivational strategies

1. Identify clients' reasons for taking part in regular exercise and physical activity
2. Identify clients' preferences for exercise and describe why incorporating clients' exercise preferences into their programme can strengthen motivation and adherence.
3. Ensure clients understand the benefits of taking part in exercise and physical activity
4. Provide clients with correct information about the amount of physical activity required to achieve health benefits
5. Inform clients about opportunities for regular physical activity appropriate to their needs, abilities and preferences
6. Describe the typical goals and expectations that clients may have
7. Identify potential barriers to clients taking part in exercise and physical activity and work with clients to reduce these

Support client motivation

8. Help clients to develop and follow through their own motivational strategies to help them to adhere to an exercise programme. You will need to consider Personal attitudes, actions and values to positively influence clients' exercise adherence, confidence and behaviour, environmental and cognitive factors and their potential effect on exercise adherence
9. Apply a variety of motivational techniques when training clients
10. Describe different behaviour change approaches to encourage adherence to exercise/physical activity and create appropriate intervention strategies for each stage of behavioural change
11. Describe the requirements for successful behavioural change
12. Describe the stages of change (Stages of change model) a person may go through when taking part in regular exercise and different behaviour change approaches that can be used to encourage adherence to exercise
13. Describe the human behavioural change related to the different stages of change
14. Analyse how the personal, environmental and cognitive factors and their potential effect on exercise adherence
15. Describe the use of incentives and rewards that can strengthen clients' motivation and adherence that can be specific to different clients
16. Use Effective communication with the clients, including the use effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills when instructing clients to optimise motivation and performance
17. Provide positive reinforcement and feedback to clients to positively influence exercise behaviour and increase clients' confidence
18. Understand why it's important for clients to take personal responsibility for their own fitness and motivation and use methods to use there are able to do this.
19. Assist clients to develop their own strategy for motivation and adherence

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| 20. | Describe how to form effective working relationships with clients |
| 21. | Describe how to interpret client responses including body language and other forms of behaviour especially when undertaking exercise |

Unit 4 (D3) Promote healthy eating and physical activity

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered and assessed in full:

- Promote healthy eating and nutrition to clients
- Screen/assess clients
- Support fitness clients with body image issues
- The role of the body's energy systems

Knowledge to be covered

Promote healthy eating and nutrition to clients

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|----|---|
| 1. | Describe the structure and function of the digestive system and the effects of healthy eating on the other major body systems |
| 2. | <p>Explain the concept of a healthy eating, well-balanced diet and regular exercise to promote and improve overall good health, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing information in a manner that fosters a positive attitude towards food and eating. • recognise indicators of poor body image and discuss body satisfaction with clients. • show sensitivity to cultural and social differences. • use knowledge of the structure and function of the digestive system when providing information to clients • explain the factors that influence fat loss response to exercise to enable effective goal setting |
| 3. | <p>Explain the general principles of healthy eating including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food groups • national dietary guidelines • carbohydrates • lipids • cholesterol • protein • minerals • vitamins • fluid and electrolytes • intake of nutrients • balanced diet • food labelling • food preparation • myths and fallacies • nutritional supplementation • Energy balance • recommended daily intake of nutrients • fuel for exercise • fuel for minimising post-exercise fatigue and maximising recovery • hydration levels |

4.	<p>Explain a range of dietary trends which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fad' or popular diets • nutritional supplementation • healthy eating ergogenic aids
5.	<p>Describe industry standards and appropriate protocols for giving healthy eating information to clients, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how and when to refer clients with healthy eating or dietary concerns to a suitably qualified medical professional/ dietician • understanding the scope of practice for exercise professionals in providing advice, how to remain within professional boundaries • how to work within the current legal and ethical limitations of their profession in providing healthy eating information • show sensitivity to cultural and social differences
Screen/assess clients	
6.	<p>Screen/assess clients to obtain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information about their current nutritional intake and physical activity levels • relevant body composition measures which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · weight · height · waist circumference · hip circumference · skinfolds · waist to hip ratio
7.	<p>Evaluate the information collected in the fitness appraisal of clients about current body composition using relevant body composition measures</p>
8.	<p>Describe the management of body composition including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metabolism • balance between energy intake and energy expenditure • energy expenditure • energy intake
9.	<p>Implement strategies to promote body satisfaction when providing information about exercise, physical activity, fitness testing and healthy eating options. To include the following healthy eating or dietary concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anorexia • bulimia • overweight or obesity • nutritional deficiencies including iron • calcium • dehydration • diabetes
10.	<p>Describe briefly the role of the body's energy systems in the storage and utilisation of energy substrates for energy production. Energy substrates including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lipids • carbohydrate • protein • alcohol

Energy systems including:

- alactic
- lactic
- aerobic

Unit 5 (G1) Promote health and safety in a fitness environment

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered and assessed in full:

- Maintain a health and safety exercise environment
- Controlling risks
- Know how to address safety issues within the limits of own role and responsibility
- Respond to emergency situations

Knowledge to be covered

Maintain a health and safety exercise environment

1. Describe relevant up to date legal and regulatory health and safety information, safety requirements and procedures for all equipment, facilities, areas and tasks, to include:
 - manufacturers' guidelines and instructions for the use of facilities and equipment
 - documents relating to health and safety that may have to be completed and how to complete them correctly
 - identify legislative rights and responsibilities for workplace health and safety
2. Describe how to address safety issues within the limits of own role and responsibility
3. Describe relevant health and safety policies and procedures which may include:
 - chemical handling
 - duty of care
 - emergency procedure
 - first aid
 - general maintenance
 - hazard identification
 - health and hygiene
 - issue resolution
 - manual handling
 - occupational health and safety
 - personal safety
 - reporting procedures
 - security
 - stress management
 - use of personal protective equipment
 - waste disposal
4. Be able to assess health and safety requirements in an exercise environment which may include:
 - environmental conditions
 - slippery surfaces
 - manual handling and lifting
 - toxic substances
 - industrial gases
 - body fluids

- fire
- infectious waste
- sharps
- chemical spills
- dust and vapours
- noise, light and energy sources
- faulty electrical equipment
- faulty sport or activity-specific equipment
- vehicles

Controlling risks

5. Describe how to, identify, control and minimise hazards in the exercise environment, to include:
- A definition of hazards and how they can be identified, isolated, eliminated or minimised
 - how to identify and deal safely with hazards
 - how to report accidents, incidents, hazards and unsafe work practices and pass on suggestions for improving health and safety to relevant colleagues.
 - the types of accidents, injuries and illnesses that may occur in the activity environment

Respond to emergency situations

6. Be able to respond to an emergency situation to include:
- be able to deal with injuries and signs of illness before qualified assistance arrives.
 - call for assistance if required ie qualified first aider or the emergency services
 - know the reporting procedures for emergencies and the emergency procedures
 - know the roles that different staff and external services play during an emergency
7. Describe first aid equipment requirements to ensure they meet health and safety guidelines and is present and functional

Unit 6 (H1) Provide customer service in health and fitness

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered and assessed in full:

- Maintain standards for personal presentation
- Communicate effectively with clients
- Provide customer with effective service
- Respond effectively to client complaints

Knowledge to be covered

Maintain personal presentation

1. Describe how to maintain standards for personal presentation that apply to the fitness industry and understand the importance of presenting themselves in a positive manner.

Communicate effectively with clients

2. Communicate effectively with clients to include the following:
- in a polite, professional and friendly manner
 - using appropriate language and tone in written and spoken and non-verbal communication
 - develop a rapport with and provide empathy with clients
 - provide information clearly to clients
 - using appropriate nonverbal communication skills
 - be able to listen to clients and ask questions to check understanding

- be able to respond to a range of clients and show sensitivity to cultural and social differences
- understand the importance of valuing equality and diversity when working with clients

Provide customer service to clients

3. Provide customer with effective service to include:
- greet clients effectively
 - customer service techniques to meet client requirements and requests
 - be able to identify client needs and expectations correctly
 - be able to provide correct information and advice on appropriate products and services to the customer
 - ensure client satisfaction
 - form an effective working relationship with clients, know legal and ethical issues relating to client relations
 - meet all reasonable client needs and requests
 - identify and take all opportunities to enhance service quality
 - engage with clients during exercise session
 - how to link customer service to client motivation and adherence
 - recognise client dissatisfaction promptly and take action to resolve the situation
 - how to provide on-going customer service to clients
 - understand the importance of client care both for the client and the organisation
 - the importance of customer service to the development of the active industry and reaching out to non- traditional clients

4. Provide alternative customer service solutions if necessary and consult with a colleague or other professional where there is difficulty in meeting customer needs and expectations, consider the types of issues which may need to be referred to a colleague or other professional.

Respond effectively to client complaints

5. Describe how to respond effectively to client complaints including:
- how to recognise client dissatisfaction
 - be positive, sensitive and polite and in responding to the client complaint
 - maintain a positive and cooperative manner at all times
 - the importance of explaining any delay in dealing with clients and how to do so effectively
 - complaint handling policies and procedures that generally operate within the fitness industry

Unit 7 (I1 and J1) Develop professional practice and personal career in the health and fitness industry

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered and assessed in full:

- Reflect on professional practice
- Improve own development and career opportunities
- The fitness industry

Knowledge to be covered

Reflect on professional practice

1. Reflect on professional practice, considering the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to identify areas where further development of professional practice is needed • how to review the outcomes of working with clients, their feedback and feedback from colleagues, peers or managers • the importance of discussing ideas with other professionals and take account of their views • identify how effective the instructor is in managing clients' activity, including their health, safety and welfare • how to identify key lessons and how to make use of these in the future practice to improve planning and instructing • consider how to monitor the effectiveness of their instruction or programmes • consider how to monitor effective and motivational relationships with clients have been • consider how to monitor how well instructing styles matched clients' needs
2. Understand the importance of reflection and continuing professional development in helping to develop client health, fitness and motivation
Improve own development and career opportunities
3. Identify to improve own development and career opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand how to access information and keep up-to-date with developments in the active industry • consider career goals • how to develop a personal action plan to help to improve professional practice and career advancement • take part in relevant development activities • the importance of regularly reviewing and updating personal action plan • consider a range of ways in which you can improve own professional practice
The fitness industry
4. The structure of the fitness industry and an organisation's typical structure, and the role of the fitness professional in the industry
5. How to register with professional bodies and how to find opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD)
6. Relevant code of conduct or code of ethical practice and how to evaluate against it
7. Consider a range of employment opportunities in different sectors of the industry

Unit 8 (B3) Plan exercise in the gym

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered in full to the learners:

- Plan gym programmes

Knowledge to be covered

Plan gym programmes

1. Apply the principles and variables of fitness to a gym programme, to meet client goals or to achieve general fitness and health gains
2. Select gym exercises that will help clients to develop one or more of:
 - cardiovascular fitness
 - muscular fitness
 - flexibility
 - motor skills

3.	Select and add to the plan, equipment and exercises that are appropriate to the client's needs
4.	Plan realistic timings and sequences for exercise to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration of equipment • reps and sets and rest time • methods of training/sequences such as basic sets, drop sets, pyramids
5.	Consider the effects of different exercise components on the major body systems to enable safe and appropriate exercise planning.
6.	Record programme plans in an appropriate format
7.	Know a range of exercises and exercise programmes to enable selection and implementation of appropriate programmes to improve or maintain the fitness of clients.
8.	Know how to plan to using a range of equipment to include cardiovascular machines, resistance machines, free weights and other small equipment
9.	Apply the principles and variables of fitness to a range of activities which will achieve health and fitness benefits and the clients' goals
10.	Consider methods of monitoring exercise intensity you plan to use

Unit 9 (B3) Instruct and supervise gym exercise

This section covers the following knowledge, which must be delivered in full to the learners:

- Preparing for the gym-based exercise
- Prepare the client for the planned session
- Instructing and supervise the gym-based programme
- Monitor client progress, review and adapt gym programmes

Knowledge to be covered

Preparing for the gym-based exercise

1. Prepare for the session to include:
 - prepare self for the session
 - arrive on time
 - have relevant paperwork
 - prepare the environment for the planned session
 - ensure appropriate equipment is in place
 - follow manufacturers' equipment specifications for use, care and checking of equipment
 - complete a risk assessment relevant to exercise in the gym
 - consider the health and environmental factors which can influence safety and the factors which effect group/individual working space

Prepare the client for the planned session

2. Prepare the client for the planed session to include:
 - make client feel welcome and relaxed
 - describe planned exercises to the client, including their physical and technical demands and the benefits of gym-based exercises
 - ensure client is aware of health and safety procedures including what to do in an emergency

Instruct and supervise the gym-based programme

3. Teach an effective warm up and cool down activities

4.	Show you have the knowledge to use a range of equipment to achieve the clients' goals
5.	Relate exercises to the Structure and function of the joints, muscles, musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and metabolic body systems to ensure benefits and appropriateness of different exercises to meet client needs
6.	Know different methods of adapting gym programmes to ensure appropriate progression and/or regression according to client needs to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level, speed, range of motion, rate, repetitions, weight, sets, rest, lever length
7.	Know how to adjust incorrect or unsafe exercise correctly, be mindful of hands on correction
8.	Ensure safe and effective alignment for a range of gym-based exercise positions to cover use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cardio-vascular machines • resistance machines • free-weights • body weight exercises
9.	Explain and give technically correct demonstrations for correct movements and techniques for performing gym-based exercise (resistance – machines, free weights and body weight, cardiovascular, flexibility) to clients and explain their purpose and expected results.
10.	Ensure your voice is suitable for the gym environment
11.	Show knowledge of how to break exercise/movements down to their component parts for example teaching the deadlift or squat component first.
12.	Use suitable anatomical terminology when instructing the client
13.	Advise clients of safety considerations for gym-based exercise equipment
14.	Encourage feedback from clients to confirm their understanding of the exercises and to identify any difficulties
15.	Observe client during the training sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to observe signs and symptoms of poor adaptation to training and overtraining • adapt instructing position to be able to fully observe client
16.	Apply spotting techniques to ensure safety and enhance performance
17.	Provide feedback and instructing points which are timely, clear and motivational
18.	Use suitable techniques to provide on-going motivation and support to clients to encourage adherence
Monitor client progress, review and adapt gym programmes	
19.	Complete a review of the client's progress to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the outcomes of working with clients and effectively collect client feedback • identify when a review of clients' exercise programme is necessary • reassess clients' fitness levels to determine the effectiveness of their current exercise programme • re-establish clients' specific fitness goals • provide positive and constructive feedback to clients on their progress and any recommended changes • provide motivational techniques to support client adherence to the fitness programme • modify clients' exercise programmes according to results of fitness reassessments and any changing requirements

GYM EXERCISE – EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING SPECIFICATION

To be used in planning and instructing

Cardiovascular training

Cardiovascular equipment used in designing gym programmes may include:

- upright cycle
- recumbent cycle
- treadmill
- stepper
- rowing machine
- elliptical trainer
- cross trainer

Cardiovascular training specifications used in gym programmes may include:

- exercises
- equipment
- intensity
- duration
- frequency
- heart-rate training zones

Resistance training

Resistance training equipment used in designing gym programmes may include

- machines
- free weights (bars, dumbbells, collars, straps, barbells, benches)
- bodyweight
- benches
- racks
- exercise balls
- elastic resistance
- proprioception and stability training devices

Resistance training specifications used in gym programmes may include:

- exercises
- equipment
- repetitions
- sets
- resistance
- intensity
- frequency
- variations

Resistance exercises may include:

- bench and chest press
 - flye
 - cable crossover
 - shoulder press
 - lateral and front-arm raise
 - shrug
 - upright row
 - shoulder internal and external rotation
 - biceps, preacher and hammer curl
 - overhead triceps press

- lying triceps extensions and press
- triceps kickback
- bent over and one-arm row
- supported and t-bar row
- pullover
- wrist curl
- bent over lateral raises and reverse flye
- squat
- lunge
- deadlift – bent and stiff leg
- calf raise
- hip abduction and adduction
- leg curl
- leg extension and leg press
- hack squat
- back and hip extension (glute-ham raise)
- abdominal, including oblique and reverse, crunch, abdominal isometric hold
- basic core stability and proprioceptive exercises
- lat pull-downs
- seated row

Flexibility training

Flexibility training specifications may include:

- target muscles
- range of motion
- duration
- type of stretch
 - static
 - dynamic
 - proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF)