



Subject Benchmark Statement

Sport and Exercise

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About this Statement

This QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Sport and Exercise defines what can be expected of a graduate in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies. Subject Benchmark Statements are an established part of the quality assurance arrangements in UK higher education. They are sector-owned reference points, developed and written by academics. Subject Benchmark Statements also describe the nature and characteristics of awards in a particular discipline or area. Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as an expert quality body on behalf of the higher education sector. A summary of the Statement is also available on the QAA website.

How can I use this document?

Subject Benchmark Statements are not intended to prescribe any particular approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Rather, they provide a framework, agreed by the subject community, that forms the basis on which those responsible for curriculum design, approval and update can reflect upon a course, and its component modules. This allows for flexibility and innovation in course design while providing a broadly accepted external reference point for that discipline.

They may also be used as a reference point by external examiners when considering whether the design of a course and the threshold standards of achievement are comparable with those of other higher education providers. Furthermore, Statements can support professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with their definitions and interpretations of academic standards.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of courses in Sport and Exercise
- a prospective student thinking about undertaking a course in Sport and Exercise
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of Sport and Exercise graduates.

Relationship to legislation

The responsibility for academic standards lies with the higher education provider which awards the degree. Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them by their relevant funding and regulatory bodies. This Statement does not interpret legislation, nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements.

The status of the Statement will differ depending on the educational jurisdictions of the UK. In England, Subject Benchmark Statements are not [sector-recognised standards](#) as set out under the Office for Students' [regulatory framework](#). However, Subject Benchmark Statements are part of the current quality arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Because the Statement describes outcomes and attributes expected at the threshold standard of achievement in a UK-wide context, many higher education providers will use them as a tool for course design and approval, and for subsequent monitoring and review, in addition to helping demonstrate the security of academic standards.

Additional sector reference points

Higher education providers are likely to consider other reference points in addition to this Statement when designing, delivering and reviewing courses. These may include

requirements set out by PSRBs and industry or employer expectations. In 2024 QAA published an update to the [Quality Code](#), which will be helpful when using this Statement.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in [QAA's Glossary](#). Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Statement where appropriate.

1. Context and purposes of a Sport and Exercise degree

1.1 Sport and exercise permeate our personal and professional lives locally, nationally and globally. Sport as a holistic concept is integral to how societies are governed and behave and can be used as leverage to meet wider political, social, cultural and economic goals. Sport and exercise can be inclusive and exclusive, empowering and marginalising, and access to power and resources is shaped by global and historical contexts. These dynamics have influenced how sport and exercise related programmes are designed, taught and studied.

1.2 Scholars and policymakers have long sought to define the value and purpose of 'sport' and 'exercise' for different agendas. While these definitions have been useful in specific contexts, prescriptive definitions within higher education (HE) can be limiting and may hinder progress and innovation. This statement therefore adopts an open approach to what sport and exercise is, and how it can be introduced, applied and critiqued across our programmes. This Subject Benchmark Statement (SBS), therefore, recognises the expanse of sport and exercise in a holistic and inclusive way acknowledging its expression across competitive, recreational, educational, and wellbeing contexts, and one that can be interpreted openly within the subject. To support this broad and inclusive understanding of sport and exercise a subject chain has been developed that is further outlined in the following section.

Purposes and characteristics of a Sport and Exercise degree

1.3 Typically, students choose to study sport and exercise related degrees due to their personal interest in, and passion for, the subject. This joy for sport and exercise should be nurtured and harnessed by educators.

1.4 A sport and exercise related degree provides a transformative learning experience, encouraging students to view the world differently using sport and exercise as a vehicle for knowledge acquisition and self-development. Core disciplinary concepts that help to transform students' thinking can be identified and provisioned as central threads or outcomes. These concepts typically serve to connect different elements of the programme, ensuring continuity and coherence. Examples of key concepts across the breadth of the discipline can be viewed in section four of this statement.

1.5 Programmes are situated within a rapidly changing and unequal global context shaped by social, geopolitical, economic, environmental and technological factors. There is a need to prepare students, through the lens of sport and exercise, to act as socially responsible citizens and agents of change. This includes developing attributes such as leadership, innovation, creativity and project management. The subject encourages interdisciplinary approaches to better understand the complexity of our contemporary world, and this SBS for sport and exercise has been developed to not only accommodate what currently exists but create space for new and future areas of study.

1.6 The following Sport and Exercise Subject Chain (Figure 1) supports educators in positioning programmes within this dynamic and complex context. The subject chain presents six 'links' (subject areas) detailed in section 4:

- Pedagogy
- Technology
- Society
- Business
- Exercise and Health, and

- Performance.

1.7 Together these areas reflect the diverse perspectives through which sport and exercise may be studied. Subject, as used in this Statement, relates to both the wider subject of Sport and Exercise and/or the subject areas as explained in the following figure.

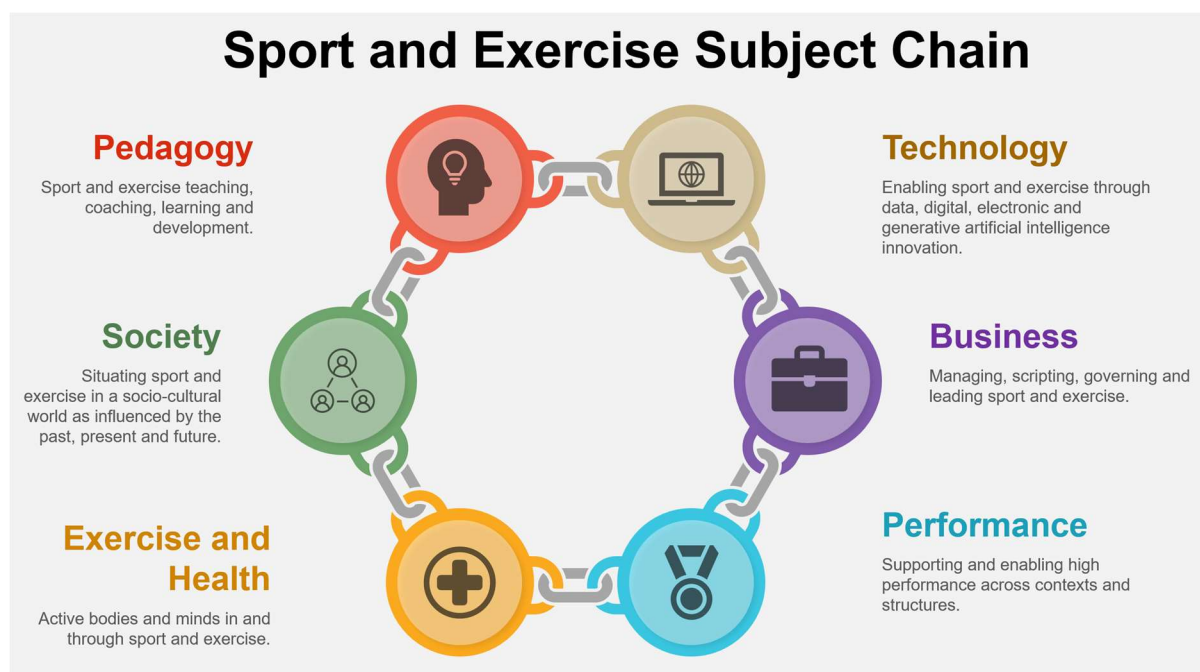


Figure 1: Sport and Exercise Subject Chain (Design by PresentationGO (www.presentationgo.com)).

1.8 Programmes in sport and exercise will typically integrate theoretical knowledge, scientific enquiry and applied practice. The subject is evidence-informed and research-active, requiring students to understand the strengths and limitations of approaches to knowledge generation and apply this in academic and applied contexts. Students apply knowledge from subject areas (figure 1) to authentic problems and translate complex information into meaningful interventions, strategies or recommendations. Through this, graduates are equipped to interpret evidence and contribute to the advancement of the field.

1.9 The following section outlines cross-cutting themes that, alongside the subject areas highlighted in Figure 1, provide a foundation for programme design. These themes are integral to the study and practice of sport and, when embedded effectively, support the development of well-rounded graduates. Equity, diversity and inclusion shape how programmes address participation, representation and belonging, enabling graduates to promote inclusive practice through social justice; accessibility ensures that curricula, learning environments and opportunities enable equitable participation and achievement for all students; education for sustainable development provides a framework for understanding and addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges associated with sport and physical activity; employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship support the development of adaptable, innovative and professionally engaged graduates; and generative artificial intelligence enables students to critically and ethically engage with emerging technologies and their application within sport, exercise and related subject.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Vision

1.10 Sport and exercise is a broad and diverse subject rooted in social justice acknowledging that all students and staff deserve to belong and flourish in their learning, work and practice. Curricula, pedagogies and assessments are designed to be representative, inclusive and accessible, celebrating the diverse bodies, voices and minds that enrich the subject. Through their studies, students are empowered to develop as informed and reflective practitioners who can contribute to a more equitable society.

Principles

1.11 Programmes benchmarked against this SBS:

- reflect the diversity of those who engage in sport, exercise and physical activity, recognising intersectional perspectives that transcend traditional identity binaries and geographical locations
- create curricula that draws on a range of perspectives and knowledges, challenging established traditions and assumptions of Westernised approaches and privilege
- eliminate structural and cultural barriers to learning through accessible learning, teaching and assessment methods, with transparent expectations enabling appropriate progression throughout the course
- create inclusive, supportive learning environments that foster belonging and a sense of value and engagement for all without fear of discrimination
- are programmes which are delivered, studied and researched by diverse communities
- equip students with the knowledge and skills to work effectively and thoughtfully with diverse individuals across academic and applied contexts
- recognise how privilege and power shape knowledge, participation, opportunity and outcomes, with students and staff able to critically examine positionality, challenge inequitable structures and reflect on how power can be exercised responsibly and ethically
- address differential patterns of access, continuation and attainment, including awarding gaps to support equitable and successful outcomes for all students.

General programme application

1.12 When designing or reviewing programmes, providers consider:

- whether consultation has involved a diverse range of partners, including students, staff and industry
- how programme content reflects the diversity of those engaged in sport, exercise and physical activity
- how the programme supports inclusion, engagement and belonging
- how structural and cultural barriers to learning and assessment are identified and addressed
- how the programme supports equitable access, continuation and student success
- how graduates are prepared to apply principles of equity, diversity and inclusion within their professional practice.

Accessibility and the needs of disabled students

1.13 The [Equality Act 2010](#) places a legal duty on education providers to adopt a proactive rather than reactive approach, where issues of accessibility in teaching, learning and assessment are anticipated.

Vision

1.14 Sport and exercise is an inclusive subject and champions an open, accessible, and enabling environment for all. This inclusivity embraces individuals from diverse social and economic backgrounds, recognising and valuing the talents, capabilities, and lived experiences of people including disabled people, those with access needs, and neurodivergent learners. Accessibility is both a legal requirement and a core principle of educational practice.

1.15 Accessibility is embedded within course design and the wider student experience. Barriers to participation are identified and removed through inclusive design and practice, enabling equitable opportunities for engagement, achievement and progression.

Principles

Students as partners

1.16 Students co-create the design of accessible learning environments, contributing lived experiences to identify barriers and inform curriculum, teaching and assessment. Accessibility is a shared responsibility, with students and staff working together to strengthen inclusive practice across academic and practical contexts.

Expectations of course

1.17 Course teams take a proactive approach to ensuring equitable access, with clear expectations provided before and throughout the programme.

Estates and facilities

1.18 Physical environments, including teaching spaces, sport and exercise facilities and specialist settings, are designed and adapted to reduce barriers for disabled and neurodiverse students. Providers take an anticipatory approach, identifying potential disadvantages and making adjustments to enable safe, independent and equitable participation across all learning environments.

Modes of study and course delivery

1.19 All courses, including full-time, part-time, on-campus, blended and online provision, will have accessibility embedded throughout. This includes equitable access to virtual learning environments, resources and enrichment opportunities (for example placements, study abroad and extra curricula activities).

Curriculum and assessment design

1.20 Curricula are structured to support progression, with clear and accessible expectations for assessment. Inclusive design removes unnecessary barriers and reduces reliance on individual adjustments.

1.21 Assessment approaches enable all students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes in an equitable way. Tasks are inclusive in format and avoid unnecessary barriers to participation and demonstration of learning that are not intrinsic to the intended learning outcomes.

1.22 Further information and support in this area can be gained from the [QAA Diversity, inclusivity and accessibility](#) website.

Education for sustainable development

Vision

1.23 Sport and exercise programmes provide an applied and interdisciplinary context for advancing education for sustainable development. Teaching supports students to develop as ethically informed, socially responsible and environmentally aware practitioners. Across all areas of the Subject Chain, students engage with and respond to sustainability challenges.

Principles

Developing sustainable development knowledge

1.24 Sport and exercise programmes draw on the natural and social sciences, technology and business, providing varied contexts for understanding sustainability. This provides a range of applied contexts through which sustainability can be understood, experienced, and addressed. These domains allow learners to critically engage with global issues and apply their knowledge in practice, including designing, implementing and evaluating interventions that support sustainable outcomes.

Developing sustainable development competencies

1.25 Programmes support the development of sustainability-related competencies, including those identified by [UNESCO](#). These enable students to understand and respond to complex challenges within the subject. These competencies include:

- systems thinking to understand sport and exercise within interconnected social, environmental and economic systems (for example, how climate impacts athlete health)
- anticipatory (futures) thinking to evaluate future scenarios for sport participation, health and environmental contexts
- critical thinking to question assumptions in policy, practice and research
- strategic thinking to design and implement sustainability-focused interventions (for example, behaviour change strategies and community health initiatives)
- collaboration through interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder working (for example, coaches, health professionals and policymakers)
- integrated problem solving to address real-world challenges across the Sport and Exercise Subject Chain (for example, reducing inequality in active living)
- self-awareness and ethical reflection in relation to values, responsibilities and practice.

Developing learning environments to promote sustainable development

1.26 Sport and Exercise programmes provide an environment (physical and virtual), along with effective resources and assessment design to facilitate applied and interdisciplinary learning that supports sustainability. Learning environments enable students to engage with authentic challenges, supporting the development of ethical awareness and informed decision-making.

Employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education

Vision

1.27 Within Sport and Exercise education, employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship represent related but distinct dimensions of graduate capability that are relevant across the diverse range of working arrangements graduates enter, from salaried roles within public, private and third-sector organisations to self-employment and freelance practice.

Principles

1.28 Employability refers to the knowledge, skills, behaviours and professional attributes that enable Sport and Exercise graduates to gain employment, sustain meaningful careers and contribute positively to society.

1.29 Enterprise refers to the capacity to apply initiative, creativity and problem-solving to improve practice, services or organisational processes within professional and community settings.

1.30 Entrepreneurship refers to the ability to identify opportunities and create social, cultural or economic value through the application of Sport and Exercise knowledge and expertise.

Developing Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in Sport & Exercise Education

1.31 Employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship are developed through engagement with authentic professional and community contexts. Students apply subject knowledge to real-world challenges, develop professional judgement, and identify opportunities to improve practice, create value and drive innovation across sport, exercise, health, education and related sectors.

Employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship education

1.32 Employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship are embedded across Sport and Exercise programmes through curriculum design, rather than being confined to discrete learning activities. Their development is supported through constructive alignment of learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment, enabling students to apply subject knowledge within authentic, practice-relevant contexts. Experiential, problem-based, work-based and interdisciplinary learning approaches can support this development.

1.33 Assessment may provide opportunities for students to demonstrate initiative, teamwork, leadership, communication and problem-solving alongside subject expertise. Authentic assessment approaches, including those developed with external stakeholders, can support the application of knowledge in complex real-world contexts and contribute to professional development.

Industry and external stakeholder engagement

1.34 Employers, professional bodies, practitioners, alumni, service users and community organisations may contribute to curriculum design, review and delivery. Engagement with external partners helps to maintain the relevance of provision, support professional development and provide opportunities for work-based learning, placements, projects and authentic assessment.

Further guidance

1.35 Further information and support in this area can be gained from the QAA publication [Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education: Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers](#).

Generative artificial intelligence

Vision

1.36 Sport and Exercise programmes enable students and staff to engage critically, ethically and effectively with generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and related technologies. Students develop the knowledge, skills and professional judgement needed to use GenAI responsibly in learning, research and practice, while maintaining academic integrity, human agency and critical evaluation. Graduates are prepared to navigate a rapidly evolving technological landscape and to evaluate the opportunities, limitations and wider implications of GenAI within sport, exercise and related professions.

Principles

Ethics and integrity

1.37 Programmes are guided by principles of respect, benefit, fairness and avoidance of harm. Clear and accessible subject-specific policies set expectations for the use of GenAI and are reviewed regularly. Practice is transparent, with defined accountability for decisions and outcomes. Students develop attributes aligned with core ethical principles including data privacy, digital literacy, critical thinking, information security, academic integrity and equitable access to GenAI.

Digital literacy and learning

1.38 GenAI is embedded across programmes to support the development of digital skills. Students learn how to use GenAI critically, recognising its limitations and implications for inclusivity, sustainability and academic integrity. Programmes ensure that students develop independent skills alongside the use of GenAI, avoiding over-reliance and potential de-skilling.

Sustainability

1.39 Programmes address the environmental and social implications of GenAI, including energy use, resource consumption and potential bias. Students develop awareness of the benefits on GenAI (such as productivity and efficiency) and risks of GenAI (for example bias amplification, misinformation and inequity) and are prepared to use these technologies responsibly and sustainably.

Equity, access and inclusion

1.40 GenAI is integrated in ways that support inclusive learning and do not disadvantage any student group. Programmes take account of differences in access to technology and digital skills and provide appropriate support. GenAI is used as part of a wider range of tools to enable engagement with teaching, learning and assessment.

1.41 GenAI outputs are shaped by broader understandings of knowledge creation, generation and dissemination and a critical understanding of this is needed to assess its trustworthiness in the context of Western bias.

Assessment and academic standards

1.42 Learning outcomes should require critical application and evaluation of GenAI outputs

ensuring alignment with academic and subject area standards.

1.43 Assessment validity needs to be maintained by designing tasks that require the student to demonstrate programme and module-level learning outcomes while using GenAI critically and appropriately.

1.44 Programmes provide clear guidance on the appropriate use of GenAI in assessment. Students are required to acknowledge use in line with academic practice.

Workplace

1.45 Programmes engage with employers and professional bodies to reflect the evolving use of GenAI in practice. Learning activities may incorporate GenAI to support authentic tasks reflecting sport and exercise contemporary practice. Students develop the ability to use GenAI to support, rather than replace, professional judgement, decision-making and accountability.

1.46 The use of GenAI in teaching, learning and assessment is subject to ongoing review to ensure it remains appropriate within sport and exercise and aligned with sector expectations. Further information can be found on the QAA advice and resources on [generative AI](#).

2. Distinctive features of a Sport and Exercise degree

Design

2.1 Courses may be designed around one or more of the Sport and Exercise subject areas (visualised in Figure 1, Section 1). These subject areas are not intended to represent discrete or restrictive categories but instead provide a flexible framework for curriculum design. The interconnected nature of the subject enables providers to draw on approaches from across subject areas and within subject areas, reflecting their context, expertise, partnerships, stakeholder needs and intended graduate outcomes. This flexibility provides academic freedom to draw upon the breadth of the Sport and Exercise subject, supporting innovation in course design and responsiveness to sector needs and emerging societal priorities.

2.2 Given the breadth of the Sport and Exercise subject, individual courses are not expected to address all subject areas in equal depth. Consequently, courses may be broad in scope or may specialise in particular subject areas, while still enabling students to engage with the knowledge, skills and methods appropriate to the course title, level and intended outcomes.

2.3 Courses may draw on knowledge from a range of subject areas and professions to address applied questions in Sport and Exercise. Where courses have substantial overlap with other subjects, providers may draw on other relevant Subject Benchmark Statements as appropriate. For example, courses with a substantial sport management, enterprise or leadership focus may consult the [Business and Management](#) Subject Benchmark Statement; programmes emphasising physical activity, health and wellbeing may draw on [Biosciences](#), [Health Studies](#) or related benchmark statements; programmes with a focus on physical education, learning and coaching may consider [Education Studies](#); and programmes examining behavioural, social or cultural dimensions of sport may find [Psychology](#) or [Sociology](#) benchmark statements informative.

2.4 Course design typically enables students to engage with both theoretical and applied dimensions of the subject. Programmes may be structured to create opportunities for students to integrate subject knowledge, enquiry and practice in ways that reflect the aims, context and intended outcomes of the course.

2.5 The applied nature of Sport and Exercise provides opportunities for authentic learning that connects academic study with real-world questions and contexts. Sport programmes are well positioned to engage students with contemporary social, cultural, health, ethical, environmental, technological and professional challenges relevant to the subject. Inclusive course design is important in ensuring students can access and participate meaningfully in these learning opportunities.

2.6 Courses may remain sufficiently agile to respond to developments in research, policy, technology, professional practice and the wider Sport and Exercise sector. This includes creating space for innovation in curriculum design and learning experiences while maintaining academic rigour, subject coherence and relevance to students, employers and wider society.

2.7 In addition to subject-specific knowledge and practice, courses may support the development of transferable capabilities that enable graduates to contribute effectively across a range of professional, academic and community contexts.

Progression

2.8 Over the course of a standard undergraduate degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6; SCQF Level 10) or, if available, an integrated master's degree (FHEQ Level 7; SCQF Level 11), a Sport and Exercise student will progress from one level of study to the next, in line with the regulations and processes for each institution and having achieved the appropriate course-level learning outcomes each year. Each level would see the attainment of knowledge, skills and experience that build towards the final achievement of meeting the overall course learning outcomes and threshold-level subject-specific and transferable skills listed in this Statement. This would usually include successful completion and the award of credit for the full range of learning and assessment, including practical, applied or professional components where appropriate.

2.9 Progression can recognise the diversity of prior experience and the challenges of transition, allowing all students to aim to achieve their ambitions, irrespective of their background. Support may be provided for academic and personal development as well as for engaging with course content and developing the theoretical, practical, analytical and professional skills relevant to the subject.

2.10 In a standard three-year undergraduate honours degree course, students may exit earlier and be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education (FHEQ Level 4; SCQF Level 7), a Diploma of Higher Education (FHEQ Level 5; SCQF Level 8), or an Ordinary or Pass degree, depending on the amount and type of credit successfully completed. Please refer to the [Characteristics Statement Short Cycle Qualifications](#) for more detailed information on 'break points' in degree programmes.

2.11 Undergraduates studying Sport and Exercise courses as part of a combined, joint or other interdisciplinary route, including major-minor arrangements where offered, will achieve core elements of the subject-specific and generic skills for the subject and will add others according to the subjects covered in their course. Additionally, they may explore the overlap between subject areas, creating further opportunities for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary study.

2.12 Integrated master's degrees (FHEQ Level 7; SCQF Level 11) may be available in Sport and Exercise or related areas. In this additional period of study, students would be expected to demonstrate increased critical thinking, evaluation, research skills and independence. Integrated master's degrees may also offer a bachelor's degree with honours as an exit award for those who have attained sufficient credit but are not able, or do not wish, to complete the course for which they originally enrolled.

2.13 Upon graduation from an undergraduate degree, a student who has achieved a second-class degree or higher would be capable of, and equipped for, undertaking postgraduate study in Sport and Exercise or an associated subject. Entry requirements to postgraduate courses are, however, determined by individual providers and may require specified levels of achievement at the undergraduate level.

2.14 Standalone master's degree courses in Sport and Exercise, including MSc and MRes provision, are normally self-contained, involving one or two years of postgraduate study in a specialist area.

Flexibility

2.15 At providers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the duration of a full-time course leading to a standard undergraduate degree is typically three years, or four years for a course involving a year abroad (such as a programme involving languages) or a placement

year, or for an integrated master's degree. In Scotland, a bachelor's/ordinary degree is set at three years at Level 9 on the SCQF. A bachelor's degree with honours, which is the most typical route for students, is designed to include four years of study, and is set at Level 10 of the SCQF. In addition, a number of Scottish universities have a long tradition of labelling certain undergraduate academic degrees as a Master of Arts (MA). This title reflects historic Scottish custom and practice with an MA/ordinary degree at Level 9 and MA with Honours at Level 10 on the SCQF.

2.16 Courses may be structured to include a range of study patterns and modes of delivery. These may include full-time and part-time study, campus-based, online, blended or hybrid approaches. Students following part-time routes accumulate academic credit in proportion to the intensity of their study, and their total study time and credit value would be equivalent to those achieved on full-time routes.

2.17 Learning may be designed to provide flexible and inclusive opportunities for engagement and participation. This may include semester-based, block or year-long delivery structures and combinations of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities that support flexibility in the pace, place and timing of study.

2.18 Providers may also enable flexible access and progression through mechanisms such as recognition of prior learning, accreditation of prior experiential learning, micro-credentials and other forms of short accredited learning, where these align with institutional regulations and course requirements. Such flexibility can enhance participation, widen access, support lifelong learning and enable students to engage with Sport and Exercise study alongside professional, personal and caring responsibilities.

Partnership

2.19 Degree-awarding bodies may deliver Sport and Exercise courses in partnership with other providers through validation and franchising arrangements. Some may work with partners who deliver specific elements of the course through placement learning, work-based learning or other forms of collaborative provision. Other approaches can include progression agreements in which a student completes part of their studies in a different institution and then progresses to the awarding institution. Subject Benchmark Statements, such as this one, play an important role in helping partners design provision that contributes to threshold standards being met in a specific subject area.

2.20 Courses are often characterised by strong links with industry, professional practice and wider communities. Partnerships provide external opportunities for students to enhance employability skills and build professional relationships in wider sporting, exercise and health contexts. The types of partnership may include involving industry partners in curriculum design and review, embedding students in live projects, and offering placement, internship, volunteering or work-based learning opportunities across a range of settings.

2.21 Sport and Exercise courses may also work in partnership with people with lived or living experience of sport, physical activity and exercise to promote understanding, empathy and effective practice. Such partnerships can enrich students' learning, strengthen understanding of diverse experiences and encourage critical reflection on issues of inclusion, equity, accessibility and professional practice.

2.22 Professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditation, endorsement or recognition for Sport and Exercise courses may offer significant opportunities for curriculum development and professional recognition, where relevant to the course title, aims and intended outcomes. Accrediting bodies and professional organisations provide frameworks

that can align academic provision with professional practice standards. Where courses hold active partnership, endorsement or accreditation status with a professional body, course teams may ensure that curriculum content and assessment reflect the skills, behaviours, values and ethical practices expected of recognised professional roles.

2.23 Partnerships with schools, further education colleges and community organisations can help to widen access to Sport and Exercise programmes and prepare prospective students for higher education study. Collaborative arrangements between higher education institutions and school or college sport departments exist across the UK, forming important pathways for progression and supporting the broader aims of widening participation. These partnerships can also offer opportunities for degree-level students to develop mentoring, coaching, leadership or communication skills by working with younger learners or community participants.

2.24 Partnerships can support students' understanding of collaborative and interdisciplinary practice through engagement with a range of professionals involved in sport, exercise, health, education and physical activity settings.

Monitoring and review

2.25 Degree-awarding bodies, and their collaborative partnerships, routinely collect and analyse information and undertake periodic course review according to their own needs. Providers typically draw on a range of external reference points, including this Statement, to ensure that their provision aligns with sector norms. Monitoring and evaluation may be conducted internally or by external independent evaluators. Evaluation typically draws on information from both current and historic monitoring to develop an understanding of student achievement and inform future course planning.

2.26 For Sport and Exercise, monitoring and review may consider whether courses continue to reflect the breadth, connectivity and evolving nature of the subject as represented through the interlinked Sport and Exercise Subject Chain themes presented in Figure 1. Review processes may also consider the currency, relevance and accessibility of provision, including how effectively courses respond to developments in research, policy, technology, professional practice and the wider sport, exercise and physical activity sector. As part of this process, providers may evaluate how the cross-cutting themes of equity, diversity and inclusion; accessibility and the needs of disabled students; education for sustainable development; employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education; and generative artificial intelligence are embedded across curriculum design, delivery, assessment and the wider student experience.

2.27 Monitoring and review typically includes feedback from current students and, where appropriate, external stakeholders such as employers, placement providers, professional bodies, community partners and alumni. Given the applied nature of Sport and Exercise, such perspectives can provide valuable insight into the continuing relevance of curriculum content, learning experiences and graduate outcomes.

2.28 Partnership with students is an important aspect of course monitoring, review and enhancement. Providers may establish formal and informal mechanisms through which students contribute to course evaluation, curriculum development and the wider student experience. Student feedback and engagement can provide valuable insights into the accessibility, relevance and effectiveness of provision and support the continuous enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment.

2.29 Externality forms an important component of quality assurance in UK higher education. Providers typically engage external reviewers within periodic review processes to

provide independent perspectives on course design, standards and ongoing enhancement.

2.30 The external examining system also contributes to the maintenance of academic standards across UK higher education. External examiners provide independent oversight of assessment practices and student achievement, helping providers determine whether threshold standards are being met and whether provision remains comparable with that offered elsewhere in the sector. Subject Benchmark Statements, including this one, support that process by providing subject-specific reference points.

3. Content, structure and delivery

3.1 This section explores how the content of the curriculum for Sport and Exercise shapes the likely teaching and learning strategy and the modes of assessment that allow students to demonstrate they have met the benchmark standards and discriminate between different levels of attainment.

Content

3.2 Sport and Exercise is a broad subject, and individual programmes may emphasise different areas of knowledge and technical skills in shaping their curriculum. This section therefore outlines the breadth of subject content that programme teams may draw upon when designing their provision. Provision may also be shaped by the research and scholarly activity in the area.

3.3 Sport and Exercise degrees are typically multidisciplinary and grounded in an integrated body of knowledge spanning the biological, physical, psychological and social sciences. The development and integration of knowledge across these areas collectively inform safe, ethical and effective practice in the subject (see figure 1).

3.4 Rather than designing curriculum based on lists of content or topics, we would encourage the consideration of key concepts in the subject. There is good evidence that focussing on concepts supports student learning through development of understanding, connections and links to associated skills. Such higher order conceptual understanding should be prioritised over factual recall as concepts can be transformative to the learning of the subject. They can prompt deep reflection, reorganisation of knowledge and encourage a different view of the subject. Therefore, relevant concepts in specific subjects should be identified in the design of the programme. Examples of this for different subjects and the associated standards are provided in Section 4.

3.5 Alongside this subject knowledge, Sport and Exercise degrees develop a shared set of practical and analytical capabilities aligned to contemporary professional expectations. Programmes place emphasis on accuracy, safety, ethical conduct, reflective practice and effective communication with participants, athletes and multidisciplinary stakeholders. Collectively, these capabilities support graduate readiness across professional domains.

Teaching and learning

3.6 The expanse of the sport and exercise subject means that teaching and learning approaches and environments will be varied and broad. Whether students are learning in a laboratory, law court, newsroom or online, the sport and exercise environment should capture the distinctiveness of the subject and one reflective of future professions.

3.7 Students studying within Sport and Exercise should have access to a diverse range of resources, extracurricular activities and events that are relevant to the curriculum and support inclusive learning environments. Resources should reflect a breadth of sources, perspectives and contexts, including those beyond the UK, enabling students to engage critically with global and culturally diverse viewpoints.

3.8 Learning and teaching modes employ a purposeful blend of face to face, digital, synchronous, and asynchronous approaches to support engagement, inclusivity, and flexibility. Modes of delivery are aligned with learning outcomes, assessment, and student needs, enabling effective participation, skill development, and progression across varied learning environments.

3.9 Learning and teaching activities are designed to incorporate a range of environments and approaches that are student centered, support active engagement and promote the development of practical skills. Delivery is structured through a variety of formats to expose students to diverse learning contexts and modes of engagement.

3.10 Sport and Exercise provides opportunity for collaborative learning through group work activities, encouraging students to develop communication skills, teamwork, leadership, problem solving and a shared sense of responsibility for learning.

3.11 Sport and Exercise programmes may involve students in the co creation of the curriculum, embracing students as co designers or co-developers, promoting a diverse range of student voices and fostering a sense of belonging, ownership, inclusivity and partnership in the learning process.

3.12 Programmes should consider how to integrate technology and GenAI to facilitate teaching and learning to maximise outcomes, develop essential employability skills and foster a critical and ethical awareness of their use.

3.13 Where possible, learning and teaching in Sport and Exercise should leverage staff research expertise to engage students in research informed teaching and support current evidence-based practice.

3.14 Sport and Exercise teaching and learning should support students to become independent and self-directed learners who are able to engage in continuing professional development throughout their careers. Learning and teaching should develop students' capacity for critical reflection, self-evaluation and evidence-informed decision making, encouraging them to identify their own learning needs and seek opportunities for ongoing growth.

Assessment

3.15 Assessment and feedback are essential tools both for the continued development of students through their course and to gauge student capability in the subject. Success within the subject of Sport and Exercise requires a broad range of knowledge and skills. The assessment strategies used by providers should reflect this variety.

3.16 Structural design that maintains assessment validity must be at the heart of programme development. Assessment strategies should reflect both the learning undertaken during the course and the graduate roles the programme prepares students for. Assessment of learning outcomes should be explicitly scaffolded through the course to allow stepwise progression. Programme teams should also consider their approach to GenAI, using an integrative approach rather than attempting to wholly exclude its use by students.

3.17 Programme teams should include assessments that are authentic in nature. These can range from in-class simulated scenarios, to real-life case studies, and work-based placements. It should also be recognised that the ethical use of GenAI tools is also a graduate skill that should be taught and assessed.

3.18 Programme teams, with help from their institutions, should ensure to maintain the academic integrity of assessments, including the teaching of it in the curriculum. In particular, the availability of GenAI tools may influence the choice of assessment in maintaining academic integrity, but this should be done so without losing assessment authenticity and validity.

3.19 Programme teams should also consider staff and student workload and logistical challenges of conducting and completing assessments. Balancing the authenticity and

academic integrity of assessments – particularly in the face of GenAI - can often lead to more time-intensive assessment strategies. Programme teams should consider how these competing factors can be best balanced throughout the course to ensure sustainable workloads for staff and students.

3.20 Assessments should be inclusive by design, transparent, and responsive to diverse learner needs. Consideration should be given to co-creation of assessments, recognising students' lived experiences, freedom in student choice of assessment and equitable demonstration of achievement.

3.21 Maintaining academic standards in assessment is at the heart of maintaining the value of awards in Sport and Exercise. Students should be supported to develop their understanding of the expected standards and assessors need opportunities to ensure that their standards represent the academic community to which they belong. This includes communicating and engaging in dialogue in relation to assessment criteria, standards and exemplar work. In a multi-disciplinary subject such as Sport and Exercise, this becomes even more important to reduce variability.

3.22 Course teams distinguish between competence standards, including those informed by relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements, and aspects of assessment that may be adjusted. Reasonable adjustments are implemented where appropriate, without compromising core learning outcomes or professional requirements - please see Section 4 for more information.

Feedback

3.23 Feedback is an important process that allows students to understand performance in relation to standards and take action to improve. Programme design should encourage students to seek, generate, make sense of and use information through interaction.

3.24 Curriculum can support the development of students' feedback literacy to appreciate feedback messages, develop evaluative expertise and make improvements to assessment work as it is being produced. This can entail supporting students to understand academic standards using exemplars, annotated samples, or benchmarking activities.

3.25 Feedback, developed through interaction with peers, academic staff, and external practitioners or supervisors, should be conceived as a continuous dialogic process that encourages active student engagement and promotes greater ownership of personal academic and professional development.

3.26 Programmes should incorporate planned opportunities for formative feedback to support learning, facilitate critical reflection and dialogue, and prepare students for summative assessment.

3.27 Programmes should consider adopting a variety of approaches to feedback delivery, including written, audio, in-person, or video formats, as well as immediate in-task feedback, where appropriate. The use of multimodal feedback and co-created feedback with external supervisors/partners should also be considered, which enhances clarity, engagement and authenticity, particularly when explaining complex scientific concepts or applied analyses.

3.28 Digital tools, including GenAI, can be used strategically to support timely, consistent, and personalised feedback. This may include the use of structured comment banks, adaptive rubrics, or feedback summaries. Feedback outputs from digital technologies should be used with critical awareness and enhance, rather than replace, academic judgement.

3.29 Coherent and well-aligned feedback strategies across levels and subject areas

enable students to understand how learning and professional expectations develop and link over the course of their programmes.

4. Benchmark standards

Introduction

4.1 This Subject Benchmark Statement sets out the threshold, typical and excellent standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Sport and Exercise. Demonstrating these standards over time will show that a student has achieved the range of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of graduates of a Sport and Exercise degree.

4.2 The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D in The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours – 1st, 2:1, 2:2 and 3rd.

4.3 Please note that minimum threshold standards are not intended to specify universal competence standards for a discipline. If a provider chooses to develop competence standards (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) as part of a programme specification, these can be informed by the relevant Benchmark Statement along with any PSRB requirements. In these circumstances providers should follow the most recent guidance from the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

4.4 Focussing on concepts (rather than content) is a critical aspect of student learning. Working with concepts helps to develop an understanding of the topic and supports development of wider skills and connections. Consequently, for each of the six subject areas (as described in Figure 1), subject area example concepts have been identified and a table provided as an example of how concepts may be integrated into threshold, typical, excellent and postgraduate threshold standards.

Pedagogy

4.5 Sport pedagogy encompasses the study of the processes, practices and environments that support individuals and groups to develop, perform and thrive in sport and physical activity settings. It draws upon skill acquisition, psychology, physiology, sociology and leadership, alongside ethics and professional practice to understand how teaching and coaching influence participant learning, development, performance and wellbeing. Through this interdisciplinary perspective they learn to practice critical reflection, make evidence-informed decisions, uphold ethical standards of practice and make a commitment to inclusive, sustainable and person-centred development.

4.6 Example concepts for this subject area have been identified to support curriculum development.

- Sport pedagogy operates within a broader governance and legislative context. Practitioners and their organisations are responsible for complying with legal and ethical requirements, following the policies and guidance issued by regulatory bodies, and applying these effectively in practice.
- Sport pedagogy is underpinned by a duty of care to participants and practitioners. The rights, safety and welfare needs of learners and practitioners should be at the forefront of good design and delivery of sport and physical activity experiences.
- Effective sport pedagogy requires conscious and deliberate attention to the learning

environment. This includes the intentional design of safe, inclusive and inspiring learning environments that are culturally sensitive to the audience.

- Teaching and coaching of sport and physical activity considers the holistic development of the participant. The development of physical skills should be strategically aligned with the development of psychological, social and emotional skills.
- The participants' characteristics, needs and motivations are central to the construction of high-quality learning in sport and physical activity. Participant centered approaches that forefront the individuals' short- and long-term needs and goals should underpin learning design.
- High calibre learning experiences are built upon the foundations of highly effective interpersonal skills. These are used to build a positive rapport with participants, facilitate accessible and inclusive learning environments, and shape interaction, collaboration and community.
- Effective sport pedagogy employs the purposeful selection of a range of techniques and approaches that appropriately align to the specific learning context. Practitioners appreciate that effective sport pedagogy is inherently context-dependent (such as population or environment specific) and requires skilful adaptation rather than adherence to a single method.
- Teaching and coaching sport and physical activity requires reflective and reflexive practices. Practitioners continually engage in a cycle of reflection and action, employing critical thinking skills that focus on how to continually improve outcomes for participants, acknowledging the influence of the beliefs, values and assumptions of the practitioner.

Table 1: An example of how **Pedagogy** concepts may be integrated into threshold, typical, excellent and Master's (threshold) standards.

	Threshold	Typical	Excellent	Master's (threshold)
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge of the principles of designing safe and inclusive learning environments that develop skills, promote holistic learning and utilise learner centred approaches, recognising the interpersonal and reflective practitioner skills needed for effective learning and development to occur.	Knowledge of the principles of designing safe and inclusive learning environments that develop skills, promote holistic learning and utilise learner centred approaches, recognising the impact of interpersonal and reflective practitioner skills on participant learning and engagement.	Critically understand the principles of designing safe and inclusive learning environments that develop skills and promote holistic learning and critically appreciate how to effectively utilise learner-centred approaches, recognising the tensions of prioritising different learner goals. Critically understand the impact of interpersonal and reflective practitioner skills on participant engagement decision making and developmental outcomes.	Critically understand the principles underpinning the design of safe and inclusive learning environments that develop skills and promote holistic learning, demonstrating a critical appreciation of learner-centred approaches and the tensions inherent in balancing diverse learner needs, goals, and priorities. Critically understand the influence of interpersonal and reflective practitioner skills on participant engagement, decision-making, and developmental outcomes in complex learning contexts.
Cognitive skills	Engage in a continual cycle of reflection and action, interpreting feedback and evidence to improve development opportunities for learners.	Analyse through a continual cycle of reflection integrating a range of feedback and evidence to inform action, improving development opportunities for learners.	Critically utilise a continual cycle of reflection and reflexivity to evaluate and integrate a range of feedback and evidence to inform action, improving development opportunities for learners.	Critically and autonomously utilise a continual cycle of reflection and reflexivity to evaluate and synthesise multiple forms of evidence and feedback, justifying and implementing strategic improvement opportunities for learners.
Practical skills	Plan and use safe, inclusive activities that facilitate a learning environment that promotes physical competence and	Plan and select safe, inclusive activities that facilitate a learning environment that promote physical competence and	Critically apply design principles related to holistic development across diverse learner groups, justifying the selection and adaptation of learner-centred	Critically apply and refine, across a range of contexts design principles related to holistic development across diverse learner groups, justifying the

	support the holistic development of learners across diverse groups.	support the holistic development of learners across diverse groups, providing suitable interventions to support learning and development.	interventions in response to individual needs, contextual factors, and developmental outcomes to promote safe and inclusive learning environments and activities.	selection and adaptation of learner-centred interventions in response to individual needs, contextual factors, and developmental outcomes to promote safe and inclusive learning environments and activities.
Transferable skills and professional competencies	Communicate and use individual initiative to make decisions to build rapport and support learning across diverse audiences, adapting practice to support learning goals.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using individual initiative to build rapport, support learning across diverse audiences and apply justified short- and longer-term decision making to adapt practice to support learning goals.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences using initiative to make critically informed decisions in unpredictable environments to build rapport and adapt practice to support a range of learning goals.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences taking personal responsibility to make critically informed decisions in complex and unpredictable learning contexts to build rapport, respond to individual needs and goals.
Connecting and intersecting concepts	Sport pedagogy intersects with the other subject areas through an understanding of learning as being complex and shaped by social, cultural, political, technological and organisational contexts. Learning is an active and social process shaped by interaction, collaboration and community that can ultimately impact on health and well-being.			

Technology

4.7 Technology within Sport and Exercise encompasses the study and application of digital tools, analytical systems, data technologies and emerging innovations that support decision-making, learning, performance, health and participation. Students develop an understanding that technologies both shape and are shaped by human behaviour, organisational practices and wider social contexts. They learn to critically evaluate technological systems and innovations in sports equipment, interpret data appropriately and recognise the opportunities, limitations and ethical implications of technological innovation. Through this, students develop the knowledge and professional judgement required to apply technology responsibly and effectively across diverse sport and exercise settings.

4.8 Example concepts for this subject area have been identified to support curriculum development.

- Technology shapes human behaviour, decisions and participation.
- Data is a representation, not reality: to be able to interpret data, a sound understanding of the nature of the data is required.
- Human judgement remains essential in technologically enhanced environments.
- Representation of data shapes interpretation.
- Technological innovation creates opportunities and inequalities simultaneously.

Table 2: An example of how **Technology** concepts may be integrated into threshold, typical, excellent and Master's (threshold) standards.

	Threshold	Typical	Excellent	Master's (threshold)
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge of technologies used within sport and exercise and recognises that technologies generate data that can inform decision-making.	Knowledge of how technological systems collect, analyse and present data, and recognises strengths and limitations of different approaches within sport and exercise contexts.	Critically understand the interaction between technology, data, human behaviour and decision-making, including ethical, social and disciplinary implications within sport and exercise contexts.	Critically understand the interaction between technology, data, human behaviour and decision-making within sport and exercise contexts, recognising the uncertainties which may exist at this interface. Integrates contemporary and emerging technologies with disciplinary knowledge to inform ethical, evidence-informed and contextually appropriate practice.
Cognitive skills	Interpret technological information to support decisions and recognise that outputs may have limitations.	Analyse data and technological outputs, recognising uncertainty, bias and contextual factors.	Critically evaluate information from multiple technologies across sport and exercise contexts to address complex problems, challenging assumptions and evaluating competing interpretations.	Critically evaluate and synthesise information from multiple technological systems and sources of evidence to address complex and uncertain problems within sport and exercise contexts. Exercise professional judgement when evaluating competing interpretations, recognising ambiguity, bias and the limitations of technologically generated information.
Practical skills	Use appropriate technologies safely and effectively to collect, manage and communicate information within sport and exercise contexts.	Select suitable technologies to investigate, evaluate and solve discipline-specific problems within sport and exercise contexts.	Critically apply and adapt technologies creatively in authentic settings, demonstrating innovation while maintaining scientific rigour and ethical practice within sport and exercise contexts.	Critically apply technologies to design, implement and refine solutions within sport and exercise contexts. Adapt technological approaches in response to complex real-world challenges while maintaining scientific rigour, ethical practice and professional accountability.
Transferable skills and	Communicates technological information	Evaluates technological solutions in relation to	Leads and supports evidence-informed	Provides leadership in the ethical and evidence-informed application of

professional competencies	effectively and uses individual initiative to make decisions which demonstrates awareness of ethical and professional responsibilities within sport and exercise contexts.	stakeholder needs, ethical issues and professional standards within sport and exercise contexts and communicates these findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences using initiative to make decisions	technological decision-making, considering societal impact, accessibility, inclusion, sustainability and professional accountability within sport and exercise contexts. Communicates to specialist and non-specialist audiences using initiative to make critically informed decisions in unpredictable environments.	technology, communicating complex technological information effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences taking personal responsibility to make critically informed decisions in complex and unpredictable context. Exercises independent professional judgement when evaluating the opportunities, risks and broader implications of technology, including considerations of accessibility, inclusion, sustainability and professional responsibility within sport and exercise contexts.
Connecting and intersecting concepts	Technology intersects with the other subject areas through its influence on decision-making, participation, learning, governance and human behaviour. Responsible technological practice requires the integration of data literacy, ethical reasoning, professional judgement and contextual understanding.			

Society

4.9 Society situates sport and exercise in a socio-cultural world shaped by the past, present and future. People, identities and places, that develop, build and change in connection with sport and exercise, are important to this subject area. Notions of power and freedom are key considerations here specifically, how power manifests, is distributed, maintained and then used in sport and exercise contexts.

4.10 Example concepts for this subject area have been identified to support curriculum development:

- Sport both influences and is influenced by society, culture, history and politics.
- Access to, experiences of and impacts /benefits of sport are not always distributed equally, and are influenced by social, cultural, economic and political forces.
- Issues of diversity, and social justice are integral to consider in the context of sport and exercise.
- Sport is socially constructed and shaped through relationships of power, privilege, agency and identity.
- Sport can foster belonging, community, identity and social change, but can also reproduce exclusion and inequality.
- The globalisation and commercialisation of sport creates opportunities and challenges that are experienced differently across contexts and populations.
- Understanding how the governance structure and ethos of organisations impact policies, structures and ethics within the sporting landscape.
- Governance, policy and organisational cultures shape participation, leadership, representation and ethical practice within sport.
- Critical reflection on positionality, identity and the production of knowledge enables questions to be asked of whose voices, experiences and perspectives are represented within the discipline.

Table 3: An example of how **Society** concepts may be integrated into threshold, typical, excellent and Master's (threshold) standards.

	Threshold	Typical	Excellent	Master's (threshold)
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge that opportunities to access, participate in, and benefit from sport are changeable, with an understanding that they are shaped by social, cultural and structural factors.	Knowledge of the complex interaction and relationship between participation, belonging and opportunity by understanding that they are influenced by geographical location, identity, historical and socio-cultural contexts.	Critically understand that complex and intersecting social, cultural, political and economic influences shape participation, belonging, leadership and experiences within sport.	Critically understand that participation, belonging and leadership within sport and exercise are shaped by complex and intersecting social, cultural, political and economic influences, using a rich evidence base to know how these factors interact in different contexts.
Cognitive skills	Interpret how decisions taken in the past impact decisions made in the present across sport and exercise contexts.	Analyse how power structures influence the sport and exercise contexts.	Critically evaluate how power and privilege (residing in individuals and organisations) disproportionately impact sport and exercise contexts.	Critically evaluate and synthesise how power, privilege and agency impact disproportionately impact sport and exercise contexts. Applying relevant theories and perspectives to complex or unfamiliar contexts.
Practical skills	Use patterns within information and data to demonstrate discrepancies in sport and exercise engagement and management.	Select evidence from multiple sources to explain disparities and discrepancies within sport and exercise.	Critically apply diverse forms of evidence to evaluate disparities and discrepancies within sport and exercise and propose potential solutions.	Critically apply and refine diverse forms of evidence to examine disparities and discrepancies within sport and exercise to inform evidence-based solutions.
Transferable skills and professional competencies	Communicate and use personal initiative to make decisions regarding what barriers exist to access and engage with sport and exercise and how to	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences using personal initiative to make decisions regarding what barriers exist to access and engage with sport	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences using personal initiative to make critically informed decisions regarding what barriers exist to access and engage with sport and exercise, why they exist and	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences using personal initiative to make critically informed decisions regarding what barriers exist to access and engage with sport and exercise, why they exist and how to address them in complex

	address them.	and exercise, why they exist and how to address them.	how to address them in unpredictable environments.	and unpredictable contexts.
Connecting and intersecting concepts	Society intersects with the other subject areas through its connections with traditional and contextual structures that shape how power and privilege influence participation, belonging, leadership and governance. The relationships people have, within and through sport and exercise, are formed, maintained and lost through shifting technological, political, economic and business environments.			

Business

4.11 Sport Business and Management encompasses the study of how sport organisations are created, governed, financed, marketed and managed across professional, community, commercial and public sectors. It draws upon management, economics, marketing, finance, entrepreneurship, governance, leadership, policy and organisational behaviour to understand how sport creates value for participants, organisations and society. Students develop an understanding that sport organisations operate within complex political, economic, technological, cultural and environmental systems, requiring evidence-informed, ethical and sustainable decision-making.

4.12 Example concepts for this subject area have been identified to support curriculum development:

- Sport organisations create multiple forms of value. They simultaneously pursue commercial, social, cultural and public value, often requiring trade-offs between competing objectives.
- Stakeholders shape organisational decision-making. Sport organisations exist within complex stakeholder networks where athletes, fans, communities, governing bodies, sponsors, governments and commercial partners influence priorities and outcomes.
- Governance underpins organisational legitimacy and accountability. Effective governance promotes ethical behaviour, transparency, trust and long-term organisational sustainability.
- Leadership is relational and context dependent. Effective leadership depends upon understanding people, organisational culture and changing environments rather than simply occupying formal positions of authority.
- Commercial success and social responsibility exist in continual tension. Decisions within sport organisations frequently involve balancing financial sustainability with integrity, inclusion, wellbeing, environmental responsibility and community impact.
- Sport organisations are dynamic systems. They operate within rapidly changing political, economic, technological, legal, environmental and cultural contexts that require continual adaptation, innovation and strategic thinking.
- Evidence-informed decision-making is essential. Effective management requires the integration of data, research, professional judgement and stakeholder perspectives, recognising that uncertainty and ambiguity are inherent in organisational decision-making.

Table 4: An example of how **Business** concepts may be integrated into threshold, typical, excellent and Master's (threshold) standards.

	Threshold	Typical	Excellent	Master's (threshold)
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge of how sport organisations are structured, managed and financed, together with an understanding of the principles of marketing, governance, leadership and strategy within sport.	Knowledge of the complex interaction between organisational behaviour, governance, finance, marketing and stakeholder interests, recognising that the sport industry is dynamic and continually evolving.	Critically understand how commercial, social, political, technological and environmental forces shape sport organisations and industries, recognising interdisciplinary connections and competing perspectives across sport business and management.	Critically understand how to address strategic organisational challenges, demonstrating systems thinking, ethical judgement and evidence-informed leadership within complex and uncertain sport environments.
Cognitive skills	Interpret organisational information and apply established management principles to familiar sport business problems.	Analyse evidence from multiple business functions to justify strategic and operational decisions, recognising uncertainty and competing stakeholder interests.	Critically evaluate research and organisational evidence, synthesise complex information and construct persuasive strategic arguments acknowledging ambiguity, complexity and multiple possible solutions.	Critically evaluate and synthesise complex and conflicting information to produce defensible strategic recommendations for organisations operating in dynamic and unpredictable contexts.
Practical skills	Use organisational information using established business tools and communicate findings appropriately.	Select management, marketing and financial techniques to analyse organisations, develop solutions and evaluate their likely effectiveness within different sport contexts.	Critically apply organisational, financial, market and stakeholder evidence to develop innovative, evidence-informed solutions for complex sport business challenges while recognising ethical, commercial and societal implications.	Critically apply and refine advanced organisational analysis, financial evaluation, stakeholder engagement and strategic planning to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for complex sport business challenges.

Transferable skills and professional competencies	Communicate and use business information clearly, demonstrates individual initiative and professionalism to make ethically responsible decisions within sport organisations.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences using personal initiative and professional judgement to make decisions to improve organisational practice through reflection.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences through leadership and with personal responsibility to make critically informed strategic decisions in unpredictable environments.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences through ethical leadership and accountability, with personal responsibility to make critically informed strategic decisions in complex and unpredictable contexts, appropriate for senior professional roles within sport organisations.
Connecting and intersecting concepts	Business intersects with the other subject areas by encouraging students to think systemically rather than functionally. Sport organisations create multiple forms of value, simultaneously pursuing commercial, social, cultural and public outcomes that often require balancing competing priorities. Sport organisations are dynamic systems, continually adapting to political, economic, technological, legal, cultural and environmental change, as well as the role of competition and regulation at the elite level. Understanding this relationship enables students to transfer knowledge across organisational contexts, critically evaluate evidence from multiple perspectives and develop strategic, ethical and sustainable solutions to contemporary sport management challenges.			

Exercise and Health

4.13 Exercise and Health encompasses a broad range of disciplinary perspectives, from exercise physiology and clinical practice to physical activity promotion, coaching, pedagogy, rehabilitation and community sport development. It develops understanding of health and wellbeing across the lifespan, and of the ways in which physical activity and exercise can be used to promote, maintain and restore health in diverse populations and settings.

4.14 Example concepts for this subject area have been identified to support curriculum development:

- Health and wellbeing are shaped by interacting biological, psychological, social, cultural and environmental influences. Exercise and physical activity are important contributors to health, but operate alongside wider determinants that influence participation, outcomes and quality of life.
- Exercise functions as both prevention and therapy. Exercise can be used to prevent disease, promote wellbeing, manage long-term health conditions and support rehabilitation. The application of exercise therefore spans healthy populations, at-risk groups and people living with health conditions across the lifespan.
- Physical literacy and movement competence underpins effective practice. Understanding and demonstrating movement is fundamental to exercise delivery, coaching, assessment and programme design, providing a bridge between scientific knowledge and professional practice, ensuring exercise is appropriate, safe and responsive to the individual.
- Exercise prescription is an optimisation process. Effective programme design requires the integration of assessment findings, individual goals, behavioural considerations, contextual influences and safety requirements rather than the application of fixed formulas.
- Complexity is the norm. Exercise and health professionals frequently work within systems characterised by uncertainty, multimorbidity, competing priorities and changing evidence. Sound judgement requires the integration of multiple forms of information.
- Individual responses vary. Biological, psychological and social differences mean that responses to physical activity and exercise are rarely uniform. Practitioners must recognise variation and adapt interventions to individual needs and circumstances.
- Health behaviours are socially and environmentally influenced. Participation in physical activity and exercise is shaped by social context, culture, environment, health literacy and access to opportunities, requiring practitioners to think beyond individual-level factors.
- Behaviour change is central to achieving health outcomes. The effectiveness of exercise interventions depends not only on programme design but also on the ability to support sustainable positive behaviour change through appropriate communication, motivation and engagement strategies.
- Evidence-informed practice requires integration. Professional decision-making draws upon scientific evidence, assessment findings, practitioner expertise and the needs and preferences of individuals and communities.

Table 5: An example of how **Exercise and Health** concepts may be integrated into threshold, typical, excellent and Master's (threshold) standards.

	Threshold	Typical	Excellent	Master's (threshold)
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge of health and wellbeing, and how physical activity and exercise influence health outcomes. Understands the basic principles of physical activity promotion, screening and exercise programming for healthy individuals and people living with health conditions across the lifespan.	Knowledge of the complex interaction between physical activity, exercise, behaviour, physiology and the psychosocial environment, and how this evidence base informs exercise as preventive medicine.	Critically understand the interaction between exercise, health, behaviour and wider determinants of wellbeing, and how these concepts intersect across clinical, community, public health and sport settings.	Critically understand the complex interactions between exercise, physical activity, health, behaviour and wider determinants of wellbeing across diverse populations and settings. Critically understand evolving evidence and competing perspectives to inform exercise and health practice.
Cognitive skills	Interpret assessment information and apply established principles to address exercise and health-related problems.	Analyse multiple sources of evidence to justify exercise and health-related decisions, recognising uncertainty, variability and contextual influences.	Critically evaluate research and complex information to construct well-reasoned arguments about exercise and health, acknowledging ambiguity and limits of knowledge.	Critically evaluate and synthesise complex and sometimes conflicting sources of evidence to inform decision-making, justify exercise and health interventions and evaluate outcomes in contexts characterised by uncertainty, individual variability and real-world influences, including clinical and health-condition-specific settings.

Practical skills	Use basic coaching and instructional skills to demonstrate and perform exercise safely. Conduct standard assessments with accuracy and communicate with participants.	Select basic coaching and instructional skills to demonstrate and perform exercise safely, adapting and progressing activities for individuals with differing needs. Conduct standard assessments with accuracy, interpret findings to inform programme design and apply theoretically informed communication skills and behaviour change techniques to support and motivate participants.	Critically apply safety principles to deliver high-quality evidence-informed practice, to perform and coach exercise with precision and contextual sensitivity. Critically integrate assessment findings alongside behavioural considerations and apply tailored, theoretically informed communication skills and behaviour change approaches to support and motivate participants.	Critically apply and refine physical activity and exercise interventions for individuals and groups with diverse and complex needs. These interventions may include clinical populations, integrating assessment findings, contextual influences and emerging evidence to adapt practice safely and optimise outcomes. They use theoretically informed, tailored communication skills and behaviour change techniques seamlessly in work with client.
Transferable skills and professional competencies	Communicates exercise and health-related information clearly and demonstrates professionalism, ethical awareness and reflective practice, using individual initiative to make decisions.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences. Applies professional judgement and reflects on practice to improve performance. Shows individual initiative to make decisions in promoting physical activity and exercise.	Communicates persuasively with specialist and non-specialist audiences, using individual initiative demonstrating leadership within exercise and health settings, to make critically informed decisions in unpredictable environments.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences taking personal responsibility to make critically informed decisions. Provides leadership, and professional judgement within exercise and health settings, including clinical and multidisciplinary contexts, influencing practice and decision-making in complex or unpredictable contexts while maintaining ethical and professional standards.
Connecting and intersecting concepts	Exercise and Health intersects with the other subject areas through the development of integrative thinking, enabling students to connect scientific principles with real-world health outcomes and transfer knowledge and skills across exercise, health, rehabilitation, coaching, physical activity and community settings.			

Performance

4.15 In the context of sport and exercise, performance typically refers to the ability of an athlete to execute physical activities efficiently, achieving optimal results. However, in some wider performance environments there is a need to consider both occupational and physical performance-based standards (for example emergency services, tactical/military). Students studying sport and exercise-related subjects should develop a multidisciplinary understanding of how to support the achievement of optimum performance of an individual.

4.16 Example concepts for this subject area have been identified to support curriculum development:

- An athlete is part of a complex integrated biological, psychological, social, and environmental system viewed through the lens of preparing for, competing in and recovering from an event. Supporting an athlete for performance requires a scientific process and a philosophical system.
- Athletes have unique genetics, goals, motivations, support systems, lifestyles, and training structures.
- Needs analyses enable a description of the athlete and the determinants of performance to form a basis for supporting performance. Assessments are based on the needs of the athlete and have degrees of validity and reliability and inherent limitations.
- First-principles understanding of theories and mechanisms support adaptation-led and/or holistically-informed interventions through evidence-based prescription which can be acute or chronic.
- Performance-support is practiced through the ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, integrity, and equity, especially in context to acute fatigue, overreaching, overtraining, injury, and illness.
- Performance indicators can be optimised by monitoring the balance between stress, strain, load, and recovery whilst taking into account the complexity of training and adaptive responses. Reflective practice and review help to identify internal and external limitations in the support process and opportunities for systemic improvement.

Table 6: An example of how **Performance** concepts may be integrated into threshold, typical, excellent and Master's (threshold) standards.

	Threshold	Typical	Excellent	Master's (threshold)
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge of performance as a phenomenon in which biological, psychological, social and environmental factors interact to influence the performer across preparation, competition/outcome, recovery, and wellbeing.	Knowledge of performance as an integrated biopsychosocial system and how interactions between domains influence preparation, competition/outcome, recovery and wellbeing, and understanding how this informs practice.	Critically understand performance as a dynamic, multidimensional system, evaluating the complex interactions between biological, psychological, social and environmental factors across preparation, competition/outcome, recovery and wellbeing, and how this can be used to address complex performance challenges.	Critically understand performance as a dynamic, multidimensional system, integrating biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors across preparation, competition/outcome, recovery, and wellbeing. Use professional judgement to resolve complex and uncertain performance challenges, justifying context-specific decisions and recommendations.
Cognitive skills	Interpret evidence to design and justify acute and chronic interventions, drawing on first-principles while considering ethical principles to enhance performance, support wellbeing, and identify opportunities for improvement.	Analyse evidence to design and justify acute and chronic interventions, drawing on first-principles while considering ethical principles to enhance performance, support wellbeing, and refine performance support processes.	Critically evaluate evidence to design, justify, and adapt acute and chronic interventions by integrating first-principles while considering ethical principles to enhance performance, support wellbeing, and driving continuous improvement in performance support.	Critically evaluate and synthesise evidence to justify the design and development of evidence-informed acute and chronic interventions through the synthesis of first-principles, contemporary research, and ethical reasoning to optimise performance, support wellbeing, and address complex performance-related challenges.
Practical skills	Use appropriate assessment methods and performance-enhancement techniques to monitor and improve performance and	Select and interpret the outcomes of appropriate assessment tools, analytical methods, and performance-	Critically apply and interpret appropriate assessment tools, analytical methods, and performance-enhancement techniques to evaluate and	Critically evaluate and refine complex performance and wellbeing data from appropriate assessment tools, analytical methods, and performance-

	wellbeing, informing preparation and recovery while critically evaluating their validity, reliability, limitations, contextual appropriateness, and ethical application.	enhancement techniques to monitor and improve performance to inform safe, ethical, and evidence-informed practice.	improve performance, justifying their application through consideration of validity, reliability, contextual appropriateness, and ethical practice.	enhancement techniques to lead the design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement of evidence-informed interventions, using independent professional and ethical judgement to optimise decision-making and performance outcomes.
Transferable skills and professional competencies	Communicate and use individual initiative to make decisions on how to support performers in achieving and sustaining performance, reflecting upon practice and feedback to identify strengths, areas for development, and actions for improvement.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences using initiative to make decisions on how to support performers in achieving and sustaining performance, using feedback to evaluate practice and inform evidence-informed improvements.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences using initiative to make decisions in unpredictable environments to support performers in achieving and sustaining performance, critically reflecting on practice, feedback, and outcomes to inform continuous professional development.	Communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences taking personal responsibility to make decisions in complex and unpredictable context using independent professional judgement while critically reflecting on practice, feedback, and emerging evidence to refine and drive continuous professional development.
Connecting and intersecting concepts	Performance intersects with the other subject areas as the environments within which it is applied are complex, dynamic, and context dependent. This required interdisciplinary knowledge to support first-principles reasoning to synthesise scientific evidence, ethical frameworks, and use of reflective professional judgement to contribute towards optimising athlete or occupational performance and wellbeing.			

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