

Addendum: Potential Occupational Specialism Structure

T Level in Sport – Draft Outline Content Consultation

The draft outline content for the T Level in Sport proposes the following structure:

- a core component containing sport and exercise science knowledge, and
- a single occupational specialism focused on coaching and personal training practice.

This addendum is based on early stakeholder response to the initial draft outline content. It considers the flexibility of the qualification structure to allow greater flexibility at the occupational specialism stage while remaining aligned with the outline content.

This addendum therefore outlines a possible alternative structural model that could be considered during qualification development. Under this model:

- the core is reduced to 360 Guided Learning Hours (GLH), and
- two potential occupational specialisms could be developed, both aligned to coaching and personal training roles but with different levels of scientific depth.

Potential adjustment to the Core

In the alternative model, the core content remains focussed on sector knowledge and understanding, supporting learners to understand participation, health, and professional practice in the sport and physical activity sector.

In this model, the core includes the following key areas already presented in the draft outline content:

- Psychology, motivation and behaviour change
- Health, wellbeing and lifestyle factors
- Programme design and exercise instruction (principles)
- Professional practice, ethics, safeguarding and sustainability
- Business and marketing in exercise and fitness
- Digital technology
- Scientific enquiry and evidence-based practice

These areas form a significant proportion of the existing core.

Science content within the core

Under the alternative model, the core includes sector-wide scientific principles relating to physical activity, health and wellbeing.

Some of the more detailed sport and exercise science content currently located within the core would instead be positioned primarily within one occupational specialism, where it would be contextualised as applied content in coaching and personal training.

This enables the core to emphasise sector knowledge and conceptual understanding, while the occupational specialism provides greater depth of scientific application where required.

This approach reflects how knowledge is often applied in the sport and physical activity sector. While all practitioners require an understanding of the scientific principles that underpin safe participation, some roles require greater depth of applied sport and exercise science than others. Positioning detailed application of sport and exercise science within one occupational specialism therefore allows qualification pathways to reflect these different occupational requirements and progression routes.

A second occupational specialism would not contain detailed sport and exercise science content. Instead, it would focus on applied practice, including session delivery, instruction and participant engagement across different activity contexts.

Rationale for exploring this option

Initial engagement with sector stakeholders indicates that entry-level roles within the sport and physical activity sector often fall into two broad areas of practice.

Some roles place greater emphasis on applied sport and exercise science, including the design, monitoring and adaptation of exercise programmes. Other roles focus more strongly on session delivery, instruction and participant engagement, particularly in community, school, fitness or group activity contexts.

Introducing flexibility within the occupational specialism stage could allow awarding organisations to reflect these different areas of professional practice within the same qualification framework, while maintaining a shared core of sector knowledge and understanding for all learners.

This approach may support clearer progression routes for learners while ensuring the qualification continues to reflect the range of roles within the sport and physical activity sector.

Potential Occupational Specialism Options

This approach enables two occupational specialisms to be developed within the same outline content framework.

Option A: Coaching and Personal Training (Applied Sport and Exercise Science)

This occupational specialism incorporates the applied scientific knowledge needed for programme design and performance monitoring.

PO	Knowledge Areas (Option A)
PO1: Planning safe exercise programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure and function of body systems• Applied anatomy and physiology• Energy systems• Fitness assessment and screening interpretation• Programme design principles• Physiological risk factors and contraindications
PO2: Delivering engaging exercise sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Movement analysis and applied biomechanics• Technique optimisation• Communication strategies• Session structure and training variables• Safe progression based on evidence
PO3: Monitoring participant performance and adapting delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance monitoring indicators• Data interpretation (charts, norms, trends)• Acute physiological responses• Identifying compensations and movement faults• Fatigue, recovery and readiness
PO4: Reviewing sessions to improve future practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence-based practice• Interpreting performance data• Reflective practice models• Psychological factors (motivation, adherence)• Using data to refine programme design

These areas align with the knowledge underpinning the current occupational specialism performance outcomes.

This pathway may be particularly relevant for learners intending to progress into:

- sport science study
- strength and conditioning

- advanced coaching or personal training roles.

Option B: Coaching and Personal Training (Applied Practice¹)

This occupational specialism prioritises the practical aspects of coaching session delivery, instruction, participant engagement, and adapting activities in real time. It does not require learners to know or apply detailed scientific principles or physiological concepts. While scientific understanding underpins effective coaching practice, the emphasis in this occupational specialism is on applied methods and behaviours.

Performance Outcome	Knowledge Areas (Option B)
PO1: Planning safe exercise programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic screening and readiness checks • Practical risk management • Understanding participant needs • Simple progressions/ regressions • Session structure fundamentals
PO2: Delivering engaging exercise sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise instruction • Demonstration skills • Communication and feedback • Participant engagement strategies • Inclusive activity delivery
PO3: Monitoring participant performance and adapting delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual observation of technique • Responding to participant feedback • Real-time adaptation • Managing group dynamics • Recognising simple red flags
PO4: Reviewing sessions to improve future practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective practice (practical level) • Participant feedback methods • Improving engagement and enjoyment • Professional boundaries and scope

¹ Option B aligns with CIMSPA Assistant Coach / Community Activator / L2 Gym patterns.

Performance Outcome	Knowledge Areas (Option B)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working within community sport contexts

Shared Performance Outcomes

The Performance Outcomes remain the same across both occupational specialisms, as they reflect the core workplace behaviours required of all coaching and personal training practitioners. Differentiation between Option A (Applied Sport and Exercise Science) and Option B (Applied Practice) is achieved through the depth and nature of the underpinning knowledge, rather than through changes to the observable performance.

These performance outcomes are reflected in the current occupational specialism draft.

Illustrative Structure



Potential benefits of this model

This approach

- allows flexibility for awarding organisations in developing occupational specialisms
- supports different learner progression routes
- maintains alignment with the same overall outline content framework

- reflects the range of entry-level occupational roles within the sport and physical activity sector.