

New and Updated Qualifications for Fitness (Personal Trainer) and Outdoors (Animator) for Pan-European Use

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1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the context and development of the BLUEPRINT *Intellectual Output 5 – New and updated qualification for fitness (personal trainer) and outdoors (animator) for pan-European use*. It should be read in conjunction with the other BLUEPRINT Intellectual Output reports to provide further background. In particular, there is a direct relationship with *Intellectual Output 4 – Scoping of the European Certifying Organisation* and *IO9 – Testing, trialling and refining development of new qualifications, awarding organisation and recognition of prior learning*.

As described in IO 4 qualification development is one of the main functions of a Certifying Organisation. The qualifications developed as part of this project are indicative of the qualification development process described in IO4 and feedback collected during the development process forming and informing the final outcomes in diverse ways.

The qualifications described as part of this intellectual output have been developed and updated in units of learning outcomes and are supported by a common assessment strategy.

2. Constructing the qualifications

2.1. The use of learning outcomes

At the heart of the qualifications is the use of learning outcomes (LOs) to design and implement these qualifications.

The 2008 European Qualification Framework (EQF) recommendation defines learning outcomes as:

“...statements of what an individual should know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a learning process”.

In order to understand how successful a course of learning is two things must be achieved. Firstly, the planned learning outcomes must be clearly identified – these are the goals that describe how a student will be different because of a learning experience, that is what the learner will be able to do at the conclusion of that course of study. Secondly, it must be possible to accurately measure or assess if the course of learning implemented to facilitate the learning was effective.

Learning outcomes are an established principle within the EU policy agenda for education, training and employment. They are central to the structure and content of qualifications and will determine the nature of both qualification delivery and assessment practices. The application of learning outcomes lies at the very core of the EQF. The core of the EQF concerns eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – 'learning outcomes'.

The learning outcomes approach strengthens the focus on the individual learner and the level of knowledge, skills, and autonomy-responsibility s/he is expected to achieve. This is to be applauded as

it moves away from a more traditional focus on the duration and location of learning to a simple output focus. However, the application of a learning outcomes approach is flawed if the assessment and validation of those outcomes is not robust and consistent across training institutions.

Learning outcomes facilitate and underpin qualification development, training, and assessment but how those learning outcomes are organised delivered and assessed must be subject to the oversight of a recognised, independent, and impartial third- party quality assurance body (as fully described in BLUEPRINT IO4).

2.2. Learning outcomes as the basis for assessment

It is the learning outcome statements that have provided the basis for the development of the assessment criteria that underpin assessments outlined below. These criteria precisely describe to the learner exactly what will be required of them in the assessment process as evidence that they have achieved the various learning outcomes necessary to perform the occupational role described in the qualification. These assessment criteria generally support summative assessments at the end of the learning process but can also be used in formative assessments within the learning process.

Learning outcomes have been grouped into units of learning where these units represent the core knowledge, skills and competences required to perform an occupational role. Once these units and their associated learning outcomes were clearly defined a common assessment strategy has been developed which appropriately and effectively assesses each of the LOs contained within each unit. This common assessment strategy is a tool which can be used to facilitate a standardised approach to assessment. A Certifying Organisation as described in IO4 should implement a common assessment strategy for the qualification which is synergised with the requirements of the occupational standards. Quality Assurance can then evaluate the implementation of the common strategy to ensure standardisation and comparability between training providers across a range of nations.

When designing the Personal Training qualification, the core knowledge and skill requirements contained within the standards were developed into packages of learning outcomes or units with associated assessment criteria. The 6 units identified were:

- Role of the personal trainer,
- Functional anatomy and physiology for personal trainers,
- Nutrition and healthy eating for personal trainers,
- Understand the principles of health and fitness behaviour change,
- Collecting and analysing health and fitness assessment information,
- Training adaptation, exercise planning and programming.

It is often a challenge to relate educational inputs to learning outcomes and to fully understand the impact on student learning. Learning taxonomies are a valuable tool for classifying learning objectives. In writing the learning outcomes for the Personal Trainer (PT) qualification reference was made to

Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills. ¹ Bloom’s Taxonomy refers to a classification of the different objectives that educators set for students (learning objectives) and is a foundational and essential element within the education community. There are other systems or hierarchies that have been devised in the educational and training world. However, Bloom’s taxonomy is easily understood and is probably the most widely applied one in use today.

The original levels (Bloom, 1956) were ordered as follows: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.

Full copies of both the standards for the PT occupational role and the PT qualification are available on request. As an illustration of the translation of educational standards into qualification learning outcomes and assessment criteria, we can directly compare our energy systems section of the PT standards with the same knowledge expressed in the form of a qualification.

Energy Systems

Learners should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The three energy systems used for the production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) in working muscle - the alactic anaerobic phosphocreatine (PC) system, the anaerobic lactate system and the aerobic system
- The effect of the type of exercise, intensity, duration, fitness levels and nutritional level on the three energy systems
- The way to use the three energy systems in correlation with the goal of the client
- The way to use acute variables during training to recruit the different energy systems
- The terms aerobic and anaerobic threshold
- Effects of interval training and EPOC (excess post-exercise oxygen consumption) on the metabolism
- The ability of the body to burn fat throughout a range of intensities (not just low intensity), e.g., if the aerobic threshold is raised you can utilise fat more effectively at higher intensities
- The relationship between METs (metabolic equivalent) and kilocalories and the prediction of calorie expenditure based on body weight, exercise MET level and duration with examples of different activities and their MET values
- The methods of monitoring exercise intensity, to include: the talk test, the rate of perceived exertion (RPE) scales (6 to 20 or 0 to 10), heart rate monitoring (age- related and heart rate reserve), and the benefits and limitations of each method
- The use and amounts of energy nutrients at different intensities.

¹ <https://www.pearsoned.com/using-blooms-taxonomy-to-write-learning-outcomes/>

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria	Evidence requirements
<p>2. <i>Understand the structure and function of energy systems within the energy continuum</i></p>	<p>2.1. Explain the role of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) in the energy cycle</p> <p>2.2. Identify the energy systems and their role in the energy continuum</p> <p>2.3. Explain the aerobic system, its fuel, by-products and function</p> <p>2.4. Explain the lactate system, its fuel, by-products, and function</p> <p>2.5. Explain the phospho-creatine system, its fuel, by-products, and function</p> <p>2.6. Explain the effects of fitness levels and nutritional status on the ability to utilise systems in the energy continuum</p> <p>2.7. Explain the onset of blood lactate accumulation (OBLA) threshold and its function in predicting exercise ability</p> <p>2.8. Explain the maximal lactate steady state (MLSS) and its function in predicting exercise ability</p> <p>2.9. Explain excess post-exercise oxygen consumption (EPOC) and its effect on metabolism</p>	<p>2.1 Energy cycle: Priming the myosin heads, production of movement, re-synthesis of ATP</p> <p>2.2 Energy systems: Aerobic, phospho-creatine, lactate. Energy continuum: energy systems work together at all times to synthesise ATP; however specific systems will dominate depending on intensity and duration of activity. Learners are expected to understand the rough proportions of energy provided by each energy system at each level of intensity, however it is not required to know the specific percentages.</p> <p>2.3 Aerobic system – fat as fuel – dominates during very long, very low-intensity activity (synthesises many ATP per gram but slowly); carbohydrates as fuel – dominates during long, low-moderate-intensity activity (less synthesised ATP per gram than fat but process is quicker). Length of time ATP can be re-synthesised for is unlimited as long as there is a fuel source available. Aerobic system acts as the recovery vehicle for re-synthesis of ATP and as such is active during any exercise at any intensity. By-products: water and carbon dioxide.</p> <p>2.4 Lactate system – uses glycogen as a fuel. Dominates during moderate-high intensity, short-medium duration activity. Lactate is the by-product caused by the quick but incomplete breakdown of glycogen to synthesise ATP. Lactate system can provide ATP re-synthesis for 60-180 seconds maximum. By-products – lactate (to understand the current thinking</p>

		<p>around the function of lactate and that there are no definitive answers, just theories)</p> <p>2.5 Phospho-creatine (PC) system – Uses stored phospho-creatine as a fuel. Dominates during high intensity, short duration exercise. PC system can provide ATP re-synthesis for 3-10 seconds maximum. By-products: None</p> <p>2.6 Effects: Low fitness means that higher intensity systems will dominate sooner and more often during times of higher intensity activity. Poor nutrition means that there will be poor availability of fuel, particularly carbohydrates. To understand that fat stores are vast, but glycogen is stored in each muscle therefore stores can run out locally, therefore affecting function in those areas/muscles.</p> <p>2.7 OBLA: Also known as aerobic threshold. Explanation: OBLA is the point at which blood-lactate levels begin to rise. If exercise continued at this intensity, blood lactate levels would rise and then level off.</p> <p>2.8 MLSS: Also known as the anaerobic threshold. Explanation: MLSS is the point at which lactate will accumulate and blood-lactate levels will rise, even if intensity is maintained.</p> <p>2.9 EPOC: The increased metabolism caused by exercise that continues post-exercise. To understand the fact that increased intensity exercise will increase the EPOC, therefore burning more calories for longer.</p>
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As the above example illustrates, the knowledge requirements expressed within the standards have been translated into a specific learning outcome. This outcome is expressed at a particular level of Bloom’s taxonomy, that is, to ‘**understand** the structure and function of energy systems within the energy continuum’ which defines how the learner will be different because of the learning experience. This learning outcome is then realised and measured through the meeting of several identified assessment criteria which predominant use an action verb ‘explain’ consistent with demonstrating understanding. Consequently, rather than a simple description of the knowledge to be taught there is a clear statement of what the learner needs to be able to do at the completion of their learning which then lends itself to the development of an appropriate assessment.

2.3. The levelling of a sectoral qualification (informally, using the EQF levels)

Assigning a level to a qualification is possible if certain conditions are met (Fig. 1). First, a specific set of information about the qualification is required (e.g., related key professional tasks, work responsibility and autonomy). Second, the requirements of the qualification must be described in the language of learning outcomes. Then the learning outcomes should be compared to the Sector Qualification Framework (SQF) for Active Leisure (AL) descriptors ² that can be done as follows:

- 1) learning outcomes for knowledge, skills and responsibilities and autonomy are treated separately and each of them is compared to the SQF AL descriptors;
- 2) some learning outcomes for knowledge, skills and responsibilities and autonomy are grouped into specific units of the qualification and these units are compared to the SQF AL descriptors.

The above methods of comparison may be used together.



Figure 1. The process of assigning a level to a qualification

We presented some examples of referring isolated learning outcomes for the Personal Trainer qualification to the SQF AL in the Table 1. Levelling the learning outcomes and finally the whole qualification we also used the “best fit” principle. This principle means that the determination of the level of the qualification is not only limited to comparing learning outcomes to SQF AL descriptors, but also requires their in-depth interpretation. For the Active Leisure sector, the question is whether the qualification confirms the achievement of learning outcomes:

1. to perform only selected tasks or a complete process of AL service delivery
2. what customer to work with – with what goals and needs,

² See BLUEPRINT IO10 for more information.

3. related to the use of which equipment (e.g., standard or highly specialized equipment, or innovative technologies)
4. what environment to work in (e.g., in typical Active Leisure facilities or natural environment associated with dangerous conditions)
5. connected with performing tasks independently or in a team, and if the latter, then what is the role of the qualification holder in the team (e.g., team member, coordinator)
6. what is the scope of responsibility for the effects of the implementation of professional tasks (including responsibility for customer health and safety) and the work autonomy?

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR PERSONAL TRAINER QUALIFICATION		REFERENCE TO THE DESCRIPTOR IN SQF AL	SQF AL Level
The learner will:			
1.	Understand the legal and professional standards and guidelines relevant to personal training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains and justifies the roles and responsibilities of people working in the AL sector. • Discusses and defends the work ethics, professionalism and work efficiency in the AL sector. 	4
2.	Know how to utilise technology to engage and support personal training clients.	Explains the rules of using and adaptation of the available resources and/or environment for the multistage delivery of AL service to achieve customer's goals (such as reduction of body mass, improvement of physical fitness and/or technical skills).	4
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the business and sales skills required to run a successful personal training business. • Be able to build a personal training business. 	Operates within defined (operational and ethical) guidelines typical for AL services.	4
4.	Be able to evaluate customer care.	Implements feedback procedures related to the customers' satisfaction with the participation in AL activities, according to instructions.	3
5.	Be able to provide good customer care throughout the customer experience.	Delivers good customer service encouraging regular participation in AL activities.	2
		Positively interacts with AL customers, purposefully using communication and motivational tools (e.g. to promote adherence to AL activities).	3
6.		Lists benefits of particular AL activities (e.g., related to the prevention of non-	2



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the functional anatomy and physiology of the cardiorespiratory, skeletal, muscular, nervous, and endocrine systems. Understand the structure and function of energy systems within the energy continuum. Understand the principles of movement. Understand the importance of the core for efficient functional movement. Understand the physiological effects of exercise and how they relate to health and well-being. 	<p>communicable diseases, participation in social groups).</p> <p>Defines the role of AL activities within today's lifestyles.</p> <p>Explains the rules and procedures for planning, organising, conducting, monitoring, animating, controlling, evaluating and post processing of the multistage delivery of AL activities (e.g., in relation to the process of long-term exercise programs, or explains standard operation procedures for various outdoor activities).</p>	<p><u>Key LO</u>³</p> <p>3 <u>Key LO</u></p> <p>4 <u>Key LO</u></p>
7.	Understand the risks of dysfunctional movement.	Recognizes and describes common hazards and risks in AL.	3 <u>Key LO</u>
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the components of nutrition. Understand digestive function. Understand a healthy diet. Understand energy balance for weight management. Know the current healthy eating and lifestyle recommendations. 	Defines terms and phenomena in other, supporting fields of the professional activity, where required (e.g., physiotherapy, cardiology, dietetics).	5
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to evaluate popular diets to identify appropriate guidance and advice Be able to evaluate an individual's diet and lifestyle. Be able to make recommendations to improve an individual's diet and lifestyle. 	Uses specialised knowledge, also from allied fields of professional work, to independently solve problems occurring during the AL service delivery in AL (e.g., related to the specific needs of the customer or demanding weather conditions).	5
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how psychological theories can support behaviour change. Understand factors that affect health and fitness behaviour change. Understand goal setting and how it can support behaviour change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes customers' expectations, needs and motives and explains how to use them in the planning and multistage delivery of the AL activities and services. Describes strategies to overcome various barriers to participation in AL activities. 	4 <u>Key LO</u>

³ Key LO: Key Learning Outcome.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand positive and negative stress. Understand motivational interviewing and how it can support behaviour change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects and adjusts the communication and motivational tools to the changing needs of the customers and to the various stages of the delivery of AL services. 	
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the components of health and fitness. Know how to perform postural, health-, fitness- and skills-related assessments. Be able to perform health and fitness assessments specific to the client's needs and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the rules and procedures for planning, organising, conducting, monitoring, animating, controlling, evaluating and post processing of the multistage delivery of AL activities (e.g., in relation to the process of long-term exercise programs, or explains standard operation procedures for various outdoor activities). 	4 <u>Key LO</u>
12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how to collect subjective information from clients. Be able to collect relevant subjective information from clients. Be able to communicate in a way that enables the client to feel comfortable when providing personal information. 	Positively interacts with AL customers, purposefully using communication and motivational tools (e.g. to promote adherence to AL activities).	3 <u>Key LO</u>
		Selects and adjusts the communication and motivational tools to the changing needs of the customers and to the various stages of the delivery of AL services.	4 <u>Key LO</u>
13.	Be able to evaluate a client's subjective information to develop appropriate findings and recommendations.	Conducts, summarises and evaluates customers' feedback related to the delivery of AL services.	5 <u>Key LO</u>
14.	Be able to support clients making positive changes to health and fitness behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the possibilities of increasing the involvement of today's society in the AL activities through the proper service delivery. Recognizes customers' expectations, needs and motives and explains how to use them in the planning and multistage delivery of the AL activities and services. Describes strategies to overcome various barriers to participation in AL activities. 	4
15.	Know the guidelines for physical activity and exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes recommendations for physical activity and health. 	2



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists benefits of particular AL activities (e.g., related to the prevention of non-communicable diseases, participation in social groups). 	
16.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the principles of health and fitness training. Understand the principles of periodisation in developing the components of fitness. Know how to monitor and measure exercise intensity. Understand the importance of evaluation and adaptation when programming for personal training clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the rules and procedures for planning, organising, conducting, monitoring, animating, controlling, evaluating and post processing of the multistage delivery of AL activities (e.g., in relation to the process of long-term exercise programs, or explains standard operation procedures for various outdoor activities). Recognizes customers' expectations, needs and motives and explains how to use them in the planning and multistage delivery of the AL activities and services. 	4 <u>Key LO</u>
17.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to apply the principles of health and fitness training to exercise planning and programming. Be able to evaluate a session and performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs multistage professional activities to implement AL services, including planning, organising, conducting, monitoring, animating, controlling, evaluating and post processing (e.g., in the process of long-term exercise program, or in the conduction of outdoor activities within standard operating procedures), adjusting the process to the changing conditions (customer's capabilities and needs and/or environment). Takes responsibility for the health and safety of customers during the multistage delivery of the AL activities and services, performed in usually predictable conditions (e.g., implementing exercise programmes for general populations, or conduction or outdoor activities within standard parameters like water levels, weather, etc.). 	4 <u>Key LO</u>

18.	Be able to use training strategies to enhance individual exercise performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects and adjusts the communication and motivational tools to the changing needs of the customers and to the various stages of the delivery of AL services. • Fosters retention and ongoing engagement with the customer. 	4 <u>Key LO</u>
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Table 1. Referencing learning outcomes to the SQF AL on the example of Personal Trainer Qualification (4 SQF AL/EQF)

The last stage is justification for assigning a level to the qualification. Individual learning outcomes specific to a qualification may be at different SQF levels. The level for the key learning outcomes (related to the most important professional tasks) should determine the level of qualification (Table 2).

SQF AL levels:	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Number of learning outcomes referred to the SQF AL	2	5	9	2
Number of <u>key</u> learning outcomes referred to the SQF AL	1	3	7	1
SQF AL level of the qualification	4			

Table 2. Assigning the SQF AL level to the Personal Trainer Qualification (4 SQF AL/EQF)

2.4. Establishing a common assessment strategy

In designing assessment tasks for the PT qualification, each individual unit of the PT qualification was considered in terms of learning outcomes and their associated assessment criteria. Consideration was then given to where each potential assessment fits into the “big picture” of the course, and how it maps to the overall learning outcomes and other major assessments.

In establishing the assessment criteria consideration was given to:

- Covering the main learning outcomes and their associated assessment criteria,
- How to best show that learners have achieved outcomes,
- The concepts the learner should master and at what level,
- The skills to be acquired,

- The authenticity of the task and whether it is set in a realistic context (i.e., oriented towards the world external to the course itself),
- Whether tasks are worthwhile learning activities in their own right and contribute to learning,
- The tasks are not overly repetitive for either student or assessor - they represent a productive use of time for all those involved,
- The assessment prompts student self-assessment and reflective practice,
- The tasks are sufficiently flexible for students to tailor them to their own needs and interests,
- The assessment is not likely to be interpreted by students in a way fundamentally different to that intended by those setting the assessment,
- Whether the assessment is reasonable with respect to the student and tutor workload,
- Providing a variety of assessment methods,
- The assessments permit a holistic rather than a fragmented approach,
- What assessments can be done in and away from the face-to-face learning environment,
- The time required to mark the assessment,
- Whether the assessment would be marked internally (by the training provider) or externally (by the CO),
- Whether the assessment is free from bias, transparent, valid, and reliable.

To support and inform this process the 120 participants at the International Standards Meeting in Copenhagen in November 2019 were asked to rate various elements of an assessment strategy covering online E-assessments, case study and skills observation for a PT qualification on a scale from 'not a priority' to 'essential'. The results of this survey are shown in Table 2.

How important are the following elements of the assessment strategy?	
Assessment	Av. rating from 1 'not a priority' to 5 'essential'
E-assessment: MCQ – use technology including traditional question types the use of videos and pictures	3.6
E-assessment: estimated 90-minute assessment – one assessment covering a range of unit criteria	3.5
E-assessment: Online Proctoring (Optional) – secure online in home if Centre wishes to reduce invigilation costs	2.9
Case study: one client for a progressive programme	4.1
Case study: initial assessment and client consultation	4.1
Case study: progressive planning and programming	4.2
Case study: programme rationale	3.9
Skills observation: focus around the interaction, motivation, correction and support of the individual client	4.5
Skills observation: pre-mapped Observation Checklist for assessor to utilise and provide specific feedback	3.6
Skills observation: 'Assessor Choice Client' plan in 30 minutes an appropriate 'PT Taster Session'	3.6
Skills observation: deliver an effective session with the client minimum 30 minutes which shows skills of the PT	4.2
Support and monitoring: online assessment – centrally monitored (pass rates)	3.5
Support and monitoring: case study materials – randomised sampling	3.1
Support and monitoring: skills observation materials – external verification of video evidence, EV visits	3.5

Table 3. Rating of the elements of an assessment strategy

The full PT qualification (available on request) provides a mapping of assessment criteria to a relevant and appropriate assessment. These assessments include a:

- Multiple choice question paper(s),
- Assignment – Developing a personal training business,
- Case study,
- Skills observations,
- Viva.

The above assessments provide a range of assessment methods and cover all the assessment criteria contained within the qualification. These assessments are laid out in a Learner Workbook (available

on request) and include worksheets to be completed by the learner and opportunities for assessor feedback.

In order to ensure greater consistency and reliability of assessment the workbook also includes marking schemes and skills observation checklists. In this way, assessors can ensure that learners are meeting all relevant assessment criteria.

The original plan was to trial these assessments and the Learner Workbook with several EuropeActive accredited training providers and their learners. Unfortunately, this plan was curtailed by the Covid-19 crisis where training providers were forced to teach largely online, and to delay any assessments. In the interests of obtaining some useful feedback on the assessment strategy the qualification along with the Learner Workbook were forwarded to a number of training providers along with a number of pre-set questions. The feedback received can be found in *IO 9: Testing, trialling and refining development of new qualifications, awarding organisation and recognition of prior learning*.

3. Fitness personal trainer qualification overview (informally referenced to the European Qualification Framework Level 4)

3.1. Qualification objective

The objective of this qualification is to provide the knowledge, skills, competencies, and autonomy required to perform the role of a Personal Trainer working with apparently healthy individuals, including:

- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of a Personal Trainer (including the relevant legislations, regulations, and guidelines for their locale),
- Understanding and being able to use technological and traditional media to plan, build, manage their business, and engage and support clients,
- Understanding and being able to engage and support clients, providing good customer care throughout the Personal Training experience,
- Understanding and being able to apply functional anatomy and physiology to personal training clients and exercise selections and programming,
- Understanding nutrition and being able to discuss healthy eating with clients, evaluating their current status and offering appropriate recommendations to improve diet and lifestyle,
- Understanding motivation and behaviour change and being able to implement evidence-based strategies to support the client and their behaviour change,
- Understanding and being able to carry out health and fitness assessments,
- Understanding and being able to design and deliver exercise plans and programmes to elicit training adaptations.

The qualification is aimed at individuals who wish to work in the occupational role of a Personal Trainer. This qualification has been referenced to the EuropeActive standards which are informally referenced to the European Qualification Framework at Level 4.

3.2. Qualification structure

Learners must complete all the Mandatory Qualification Units.

Qualification – Mandatory Units	
Role of the Personal Trainer	Functional Anatomy and Physiology for Personal Trainers
Nutrition and Healthy Eating for Personal Trainers	Understanding the Principles of Health and Fitness Behaviour Change
Collecting and Analysing Health and Fitness Assessment Information	Training Adaptation, Exercise Planning and Programming

Recommended minimum total qualification details are shown in the table below (expressed in hours):

Learning Hours	Guided Learning	Estimated Total Time	ECVET Credits
L3 FI pre-requisite*	48-60	150-180	6
L4 PT	80-110	275-330	11
L3 FI & L4 (combined*)	112-140	425-510	17

Pre-requisite before a student starts training towards the Personal Trainer qualification

*Before starting the Personal Trainer qualification training the student should equal or exceed the knowledge, skills, competencies, and autonomy of an EQF Level 3 Fitness Instructor. These requirements are described in the EuropeActive standards.⁴

3.3. Unit Summaries

3.3.1. Role of the Personal Trainer

This module provides the learner with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and autonomy to:

- Understand the legal and professional standards and guidelines for Personal Trainers,
- Know how to utilise technology to engage and support clients,

⁴ Available online: https://www.europeactive-standards.eu/sites/europeactive-standards.eu/files/documents/standards19/Personal-Trainer_201905.pdf



- Understand the business and sales skills required to run a successful personal training business,
- Be able to build a personal training business,
- Be able to evaluate customer care,
- Be able to provide good customer care.

3.3.2. Functional Anatomy and Physiology for Personal Trainers

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the functional anatomy and physiology of the key systems of the human body,
- Understand the principles of movement,
- Understand the importance of the core for functional movement,
- Understand the physiological effects of exercise,
- Understand the risks of dysfunctional movement.

3.3.3. Nutrition and healthy eating for Personal Trainers

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the components of nutrition,
- Understand digestive function,
- Understand a healthy diet,
- Understand energy balance for weight management,
- Know the current healthy eating recommendations,
- Be able to evaluate diets and offer appropriate guidance, advice and recommendations.

3.3.4. Understanding the principles of health and fitness behaviour change

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand how psychological theories can support behaviour change,
- Understand factors that affect health and fitness behaviour change,
- Understand goal setting and motivational interviewing,
- Understand positive and negative stress.

3.3.5. Collecting and analysing health and fitness assessment information

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the components of health and fitness,
- Know how to and be able to collect subjective information from clients and perform objective assessments of health, fitness, and posture,
- Be able to communicate with clients in a way that helps them feel comfortable providing personal information,
- Be able to evaluate a client's information to develop appropriate findings and recommendations,
- Be able to support clients making positive changes to health and fitness behaviour.

3.3.6. Training adaptation, exercise planning and programming

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the guidelines for physical activity and exercise,
- Understand the principles of health and fitness training,
- Understand the principles of periodisation,
- Know how to monitor and measure exercise intensity,
- Understand the importance of evaluation and adaptation,
- Be able to apply knowledge to exercise planning and programming,
- Be able to use training strategies to enhance individual exercise performance
- Be able to evaluate a session and performance.

It should be noted that the development of the PT qualification and the foresight work outlined in BLUEPRINT IO 3 Skills Foresight has also been invaluable in understanding current skills gaps and in determining future skills needs. This exercise has resulted in the additions to both the PT standards and the PT qualification, specifically the inclusion of the additional learning outcomes:

- Know how to utilise technology to engage and support personal training clients,
- Understand the business and sales skills required to run a successful personal training business

The inclusion of these learning outcomes and their associated assessment criteria is a direct response to the need for Personal Trainers to work with digital tools and technologies, to be successful in an increasingly competitive environment and to provide value to their customers. These additions have already been implemented in the training programmes of many training providers across Europe and will be key in meeting future skills needs. This again illustrates the direct impact that the work of the BLUEPRINT project has had in supporting fitness professionals to thrive and be successful.

3.3.7. Common assessment strategy

Developing a common assessment strategy is viewed as one of the most important aspects of being able to deliver qualifications across Europe. In a consistent and quality-assured way. Learners must complete the following holistic assessments which cover the relevant aspects of each unit:

- A multiple-choice examination,
- An assignment – developing a personal training business,
- A case study – for one personal training client,
- A skills observation – client consultation,
- A skills observation – health and fitness assessments,
- A skills observation – personal training delivery,
- A reflective evaluation,
- A viva.

4. Outdoor animator qualification overview (referenced to the European Qualification Framework Level 5)

4.1. Qualification Objective

The objective of this qualification is to provide the knowledge and skills required to perform the varied roles of an Outdoor Animator, including:

- Understanding the local environment (e.g., geography, history, meteorology, conservation areas) and being able to communicate key features, issues, safety concerns to participants in an appropriate manner,
- Understanding and being able to act as a professional when leading groups undertaking outdoor activities,
- Being able to work safely and deal with emergencies,
- Understanding and being able to manage outdoor activities, ensuring that legislations, regulations, guidelines, and best practice are always followed,
- Being able to work with groups and individuals within groups to ensure a safe, enjoyable, and valuable experience for all.

The qualification is aimed at individuals who wish to work in the outdoors delivering recreational activities to a range of participants. This qualification has been mapped to the ELESAs standards⁵ which are informally mapped to the EQF at Level 5.

⁵ <https://www.active-leisure-alliance.eu/projects/elesa>

4.2. Qualification Structure

Learners must complete all the Mandatory Qualification Modules and a minimum of two Professional Technical Capacity modules to achieve the qualification.

Qualification – Mandatory Modules	
Outdoor Environment	Animation Skills
Outdoor Animator as a Profession	Use of Specific Technical Resources
Basic Safety Programme	Applied Psychology
Managing General Technical Resources	Pedagogy and Communication Strategies
Applied Physiology	Safety Management
Workplace Organisation - Management	Workplace Organisation – Service Delivery
Professional Technical Capacity Modules	
Kayaking/Canoeing on lakes (non-inflatable kayak, inflatable kayak/fun-yak, inflatable canoe, open canoe, sit-on-top canoe)	Kayaking/Canoeing on streams (non-inflatable kayak, inflatable kayak/fun-yak, inflatable canoe, open canoe, sit-on-top canoe)
Sea Kayaking	Caving
Alpine Skiing	High Ropes Parks
Snowboarding	Top rope climbing
Hiking and Walking	Via Ferrata
Orienteering	Archery
Mountain Biking	Rafting
Canyoning	White Water Swimming

Recommended minimum total qualification details are shown in the table below (expressed in hours):

Total Qualification Time (in hours)	Directed Learning	Self-Directed Learning	Workplace Learning	ECVET Credits
3200	1200	390	1610	120

4.3. Module Summaries

4.3.1. Outdoor Environment

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the culture, history, and local environment,
- Understand the natural and geographical environment,
- Understand and interpret international designations and areas of conservation,
- Be able to apply local knowledge when acting as an outdoor animator.

Common Assessment Strategy



The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A Project – Developing Local Knowledge,
- A Performance, or Practical Observation.

4.3.2. Outdoor Animator as a Profession

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the role of outdoor animators,
- Be able to act as a professional outdoor animator.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A Portfolio of workplace/experiential evidence and a written report/reflective log to explain the theories applied and rationales for professional practice,
- A Performance, or Practical Observation.

4.3.3. Basic Safety Programme

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the relevant regulations and legislations,
- Understand risk management,
- Be able to plan and deliver safe and effective outdoor programmes,
- Be able to deal with emergencies in the outdoors.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A Portfolio of workplace/experiential evidence and a written report/reflective log to explain the theories applied and rationales for professional practice,
- A Performance, or Practical Observation.

4.3.4. Manage General Technical Resources

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand how to use equipment appropriately,
- Be able to manage general technical equipment.



Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A Portfolio of workplace/experiential evidence and a written report/reflective log to explain the theories applied and rationales for professional practice,
- A Performance, or Practical Observation.

4.3.5. Applied Physiology

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand anatomy and physiology relevant to outdoor animation,
- Understand the principles of movement,
- Be able to apply anatomy and physiological understanding to outdoor animation.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A Multiple-Choice Examination,
- A Performance, or Practical Observation.

4.3.6. Workplace Organisation – Management

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand relevant legislation and regulations,
- Understand outdoor tourism products,
- Be able to act as a professional Outdoor Animator.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A Portfolio of workplace/experiential evidence and a written report/reflective log to explain the theories applied and rationales for professional practice,
- A Performance, or Practical Observation.

4.3.7. Animation Skills

This module provides the learner with the skills to be able to animate groups in the outdoors.

Common Assessment Strategy



The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A Performance, or Practical Observation.

4.3.8. Use of Specific Technical Resources

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Know how to use resources,
- Know how to transport resources, equipment, and people safely,
- Be able to transport, prepare and use resources safely.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A portfolio of workplace/experiential evidence and a written report/reflective log to explain the theories applied and rationales for professional practice,
- A performance, or practical observation.

4.3.9. Applied Psychology

This module provides the learner with the knowledge to understand the human mind and its application in the outdoor context.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A portfolio of workplace/experiential evidence and a written report/reflective log to explain the theories applied and rationales for professional practice.

4.3.10. Pedagogy and Communication Strategies

This module provides the learner with the skills to be able to communicate efficiently with a range of participants.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A performance, or practical observation.

4.3.11. Safety Management

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Prepare for a safe and effective session,
- Apply legislation and regulation appropriately,
- Manage emergencies and rescues,
- Report on emergencies and activities.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A portfolio of workplace/experiential evidence and a written report/reflective log to explain the theories applied and rationales for professional practice,
- A performance, or practical observation.

4.3.12. Workplace Organisation – Service Delivery

This module provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to:

- Be able to deliver a professional Outdoor Animation service.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete the following assessments to achieve this module:

- A performance, or practical observation.

4.3.13. Professional Technical Capacity (PTC) Modules

In addition to the Mandatory Modules, learners must complete a minimum of two PTC Modules to achieve the qualification. The PTC Modules demonstrate that the learner has the required technical competence in the selected outdoor activities to apply this knowledge and skill to leading outdoor animation activities.

Common Assessment Strategy

The learner must complete a performance observation for each of their selected PTC modules.

5. Conclusion

The qualifications developed as part of BLUEPRINT IO5 have been designed using existing educational standards. The translation of these standards into units of learning outcomes with associated assessment criteria for each learning outcome has then allowed the development of a full assessment strategy. It is hoped that these qualifications will ultimately replace the existing standards as the reference point for training providers across Europe on which, they will base the delivery and assessment of their training courses.

The development of a common assessment strategy seeks to further standardise the outcomes of training provision across Europe. Quality assurance of the delivery of training courses is hugely important but if the assessment of those courses is largely left in the hands of training providers the potential for variable and inconsistent outcomes remain. Consequently, the introduction of a common assessment will ultimately lead to greater standardisation of the knowledge, skills and competencies of professionals working within the active leisure sector across Europe. It will allow a Certifying Organisation as described in IO4 to have a direct relationship with learners and to be wholly confident of the level of achievement of those learners. This will in turn provide a sound foundation in the promotion of the mutual recognition of European qualifications and promote the necessary conditions for a skilled and mobile workforce.

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