



ESSA:
EXERCISE & SPORTS SCIENCE AUSTRALIA

PRACTICUM STANDARDS

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1.0 Purpose and scope

1.1 Purpose

1. The Practicum Standards sets out the minimum specifications for the completion of practical industry or workplace experience by an individual to meet the entry requirements for the relevant ESSA practitioner accreditation/s.
2. Practicum is supervised work experience completed at a placement site as part of a course of study. Practicum placements allow students to develop and demonstrate competence in integrating and applying their professional knowledge and skills in a real-world setting. Practicum provides opportunities for students to engage with industry, undertake workplace tasks and gain experience in inter-professional practice.

1.2 Scope

1. These Standards apply to all individuals seeking to gain practitioner accreditation as an Accredited Exercise Scientist, an Accredited Exercise Physiologist and/or Accredited Sports Scientist (Level 1), on both accredited-course and non-accredited course pathways. This includes:
 - a. Students undertaking an ESSA-accredited course
 - b. Graduates of a non-ESSA accredited course
 - c. Overseas-qualified individuals

2.0 Standards

2.1 Exercise Science Specifications

Hours

3. A minimum total of **140 hours** of practicum is required that includes:
 - a. At least **80 hours** of activities to demonstrate competence in exercise assessment **and** prescription **and** delivery. The 80 hours are not required to be evenly split across assessment, prescription, and delivery activities.
 - b. Up to **60 hours** undertaking any other activities that reflect the AES scope of practice.
4. All activities completed must fall within the AES scope of practice and involve active student engagement. (See Appendix for examples of acceptable and unacceptable activities.)
5. Exercise assessment and prescription hours must be with clients who are seen for the purpose of undertaking an exercise intervention to improve their health and fitness, well-being, or performance, and not participating in an exercise intervention for the treatment and/or management of a clinical condition or injury.
6. Exercise delivery hours may be completed with a non-clinical client (i.e. with no diagnosed condition or injury) or with a clinical client where the exercise prescription is completed by AEP or an appropriately qualified health professional.
7. Students are not able to provide any part of the billed service under private health insurance schemes. Students may observe sessions under these schemes where informed consent has been obtained from the client.
8. Students may participate in compensable NDIS sessions provided informed consent is obtained from the client and the arrangement is included in the service agreement.
9. No more than **15 hours** can be undertaken in a simulated learning environment (SLE)*.

Supervision

1. All supervisors must be qualified and experienced relevant to the activity they are supervising. Supervisors for in person and online delivery of exercise hours must be trained in exercise prescription.
2. At least **80 hours** of practicum must be by one or more of the following:
 - a. An individual with a Bachelor level degree or higher in exercise and sports science
 - b. An individual with an ASCA level 2 qualification, where the placement is in a strength and conditioning context
 - c. A Bachelor level or higher qualified physical education teacher with a major in physical education, where the placement is completed in a school setting.
3. Up to **60 hours** may be supervised by a professional who holds an externally recognised, formal qualification for the activity they are supervising.
4. For exercise assessment, prescription and delivery hours supervised by an individual described in clause 3 above, an oversight supervision plan must be in place with an individual described in clause 2.

2.2 Exercise Physiology Specifications

Hours

1. A minimum total of **360 hours** of practicum is required to be undertaken in a variety of activities to demonstrate attainment of competency in exercise assessment **and** prescription **and** delivery including:
 - a. At least **200 hours** across the AEP core areas of practice.
 - b. The remaining **160 hours** may be in any area across the AEP scope of practice ensuring:
 - No more than 100 hours across the emerging or niche areas of practice

Please note: The AEP Professional Standards for Accreditation- Support Guide provides examples of core, emerging and niche areas of practice.

2. Hours do not need to be evenly split across different areas of practice.
3. Multiple pathologies, conditions or areas may be recorded for a single client, but the overall total hours requirement must still be met.
4. All activities completed must involve active student engagement.
5. All activities completed must fall within the AEP scope of practice. (See Appendix for examples of acceptable and unacceptable activities.)
6. Students are not able to provide any part of the billed service under Medicare, Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) or private health insurance schemes. Students may observe sessions under these schemes where informed consent has been obtained from the client.
7. Students may participate in compensable NDIS sessions provided informed consent is obtained from the client and the arrangement is included in the service agreement.
8. No more than **40 hours** can be undertaken in a simulated learning environment (SLE).

Supervision

1. All supervisors must be qualified and experienced relevant to the activity they are supervising.
2. At least **200 hours** of practicum must be supervised by an AEP, either directly or through a documented oversight supervision arrangement.
3. Up to **160 hours** may be supervised by a professional who holds an externally recognised formal qualification for the activity they are supervising, and relevant to the client condition they are servicing.

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2.3 Sports Science Specifications

Hours

1. A minimum total of **360 hours** of practicum is required to be undertaken in activities across the ASpS scope of practice ensuring:
 - a. a **range of sports science disciplines**, and
 - b. A minimum of 120 hours of direct service delivery with sport science service users

Please note: Sports Science practicum hours must be completed separate to other discipline practicum requirements.
2. All activities completed involve active student engagement.
(See Appendix for some examples of acceptable and unacceptable activities.)
3. Practicum hours may be conducted across multiple domains at one organisation.
4. No more than 40 hours can be undertaken in a simulated learning environment (SLE).

Supervision

1. All supervisors must be qualified and experienced relevant to the activity they are supervising.
2. The 360 hours of practicum must be supervised by:
 - a. an ESSA Accredited Sports Scientist (Level 1 or 2)
 - b. an individual eligible to be accredited as an ESSA Accredited Sport Scientist
 - c. an individual with an external qualification recognised by ESSA including but not limited to Accredited Sports Scientists with British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) or Sport and Exercise Science New Zealand (SESNZ); accredited coach with UK Strength and Conditioning Association (UKSCA)
 - d. Professional who holds an externally recognised formal qualification for the activity they are supervising, and relevant to the sports service (e.g. AEP, AES)

3.0 Definitions

All terms are defined as per the ESSA glossary

Accredited Exercise Scientist (AES) – An individual holding current AES practitioner accreditation with ESSA

Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP) – An individual holding current AEP practitioner accreditation with ESSA

Accredited Sports Scientist (ASpS) – An individual holding current ASpS practitioner accreditation with ESSA

AES Professional Standards – means the Accredited Exercise Scientist Professional Standards for Accreditation

AEP Professional Standards – means the Accredited Exercise Physiologist Professional Standards for Accreditation

ASpS Professional Standards – The Accredited Sports Scientist Professional Standards for Accreditation Level 1

Area of practice – A specific health condition, or group of conditions, to which an exercise professional applies their knowledge and skills.

Emerging area of practice – An area of practice where there is not yet a strong evidence base for the benefits of exercise, or it is not a well-established area of practice, but there are indications that exercise may be beneficial, or it is a health issue an AEP may encounter.

Externally recognised – A qualified and experienced professional who holds a qualification (recognised or endorsed by a regulating authority such as a national association or AHPRA) for the activity they are supervising.

Niche area of practice – An area of practice where there may be a strong evidence base for the benefits of exercise in improving, maintaining or preventing decline of health-related status and function. It may have a lower prevalence in the client/populations an AEP would see, is an area of special interest, and/or is a less established area of practice.

Knowledge – What an individual knows and understands. Can be described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity.

Skills – What an individual can do. Can be described in terms of kinds and complexity and includes cognitive, technical, communication, creative, interpersonal, and generic skills.

Practice setting – The context, industry sector or type of workplace in which an exercise professional is practising.

Core area of practice – An area of practice where there is a strong evidence base for the benefits of exercise improving, maintaining or preventing decline of health-related status and function. This includes health conditions such as chronic disease and injuries. There is usually a high prevalence in the client/populations an AEP would see and is often considered an established area of practice.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – Assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning against the requirements or competencies of a course of study to determine eligibility for advanced standing or credit.

Simulated Learning Environment (SLE) – A fully interactive practice and learning environment that replicates substantial aspects of a real-world experience, e.g. mannequins, part-task trainers, simulated patients, or computer-generated simulations. It does not include peers practicing skills during a laboratory class.

Variety of activities – The expectation the student undertakes a range of activities within the scope of practice for the profession.

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Appendix – Practicum Activities

Exercise Science

Examples of acceptable activities – 80 hours (Exercise assessment, prescription, and delivery)

Assessment

- Conduct initial interview / gather pre-screen information
- Biomechanical assessment / analysis
- Body composition assessment
- Fitness / exercise testing

Prescription

- Design of an exercise session
- Selections of exercise modality, intensity, and other prescription variables
- Developing a periodisation plan

Delivery

- Conduct warm up and / or cool down
- Delivery of an exercise-based session (such as gym, strength and conditioning, workplace, outdoor or other setting)
- Implementation of an exercise program designed by an appropriately qualified health professional for a clinical client (diagnosed condition or injury)
- Monitoring client in a session
- Conduct a lifestyle management program

Examples of acceptable activities – 60 hours (Other)

- Sports coaching or skill development sessions (from grass roots to elite level for both individuals or teams)
- Sports first aid / trainer (note: massage activities must not be included)
- Match / performance analysis (including GPS tracking or match filming for player review)
- Education / health promotion
- Sports drug testing / anti-doping activities
- Anti-doping activities for sport
- Data collection / analysis (including research and sports science settings)
- Equipment calibration
- Blood, urine or sweat analysis

Examples of unacceptable activities:

- Physiotherapy / chiropractic treatment
- Exercise assessment or prescription for clinical clients
- Massage / dry needling
- Dietary / psychological intervention
- Child supervision
- Cleaning / maintaining of gym equipment
- Research unrelated to the field of exercise and sports science or involves animals

Exercise Physiology

Assessment with clients diagnosed with health conditions

- Conduct initial interview / gather pre-screen information
- Health / exercise testing

Prescription with clients diagnosed with health conditions

- Design of an exercise sessions/interventions
- Selections of exercise modality, intensity, and other prescription variables

Delivery

- Delivery of an exercise-based session (in person or telehealth)
- Monitoring client in a session

Examples of acceptable activities –

- Relevant diagnostic procedure tests but not for the purposes of providing a diagnosis (e.g. ECG, stress test, clinical investigations)
- Reviewing or developing clinical case notes
- Client report writing (with supervisor oversight/sign off)
- Case conferences / team meetings
- Education delivery for a specific pathology (e.g. cancer education session)
- Research with an exercise intervention for a special population (e.g. conducting a weekly type two diabetes group exercise class)

Examples of unacceptable activities:

- Clients being seen for the purpose of improving health and well-being with no identified pathology (apparently healthy) cannot be included in the 360 hours of exercise physiology practicum
- Activities outside of the AES/AEP scope of practice respective to the student

Observation Activities

Observation of practice that allows active student engagement and provides a meaningful learning activity within the scope of practice can be counted towards the required practicum hours.

Examples of student engagement include:

- Developing mock reports
- Developing mock treatment plans with justification
- Taking own case notes
- Undertaking assessment and treatment tasks outside of third party funded consultations
- Case conference between supervisor and student regarding consultation occurring before, during or after
- Simulation activities

Sports Science

Assessment

- Gather pre-screen information
- Design, modification and apply Sports Performance assessment protocols

Application

- Design of an interventions
- Design of a program
- Analysis of and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative
- Translation of results into practical application

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Delivery

- Delivery of a sports science intervention and strategies (in person or telehealth) for competition or training
- Monitoring client in a session

Examples of acceptable activities –

- Education and advice on health and well-being in the context of sports performance
- Support and motivate athlete and coaches to achieve performance goals
- Data analysis of laboratory and field-testing activities
- Reporting and presenting of data collected for practical interpretation
- Delivery of exercise prescription/testing activities
- Data collection from performance/exercise testing activities
- Activities related to periodisation and training load management
- Use of sports science specific equipment i.e. motion detection devices.
- Measurement of physiological changes and capacity of athletes

Examples of unacceptable activities:

- Activities outside of the ASpS scope of practice respective to the student
- Dietary interventions