

EuropeActive Occupational Standards Summary Document

Clinical Exercise Professional (EQF Level 7)

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Clinical Exercise Professional

Definition

A Clinical Exercise Professional has a role, which includes, designing, implementing, conducting/instructing, evaluating, and supervising exercise/physical activity programmes for the populations with determined clinical conditions, screening for risk factors and fitness testing by collecting and analysing client information and using digital tools to ensure the effectiveness and safety of personal and group exercise programmes, and liaise with other health professionals. The Clinical Exercise Professional also supervises other fitness professionals, participates in the implementation of active and healthy lifestyle promotion activities and programmes, in the club, in the community, or in clinical settings, provides general education on healthy lifestyles, and conducts basic research tasks.

Scope

A Clinical Exercise Professional works with populations with a range of pre-clinical and clinical conditions and defined as users with a high-risk profile. This occupation is informally referenced to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 7.

(High risk adult - a person with current severe disease or disability. Based on: NHS. Exercise Referral Systems: National Quality Assurance Framework. 2001.)

Level of entry on to EREPS

Level 7

Specific pre-requisites

EQF Level 6 Graduate Exercise Professional or equivalent accreditation certification.

Requirements profile

Qualification Requirement

The Clinical Exercise Professional (level 7) registered at EREPS, is a Graduate Exercise Professional (level 6) that holds a master degree with, at least, the amount of credits listed below, for each of the contents considered as essential and specific to fulfil the occupational roles described for this professional. Note that the master degree may be specifically in Exercise Sciences, but also in Sport Sciences, Physical Education, or have other title, which might not reflect those contents. In addition, all registered professionals need to abide the EREPS "Code of Ethical Practice".

Experience Requirement

A Clinical Exercise Professional is expected to work in the health and fitness industry as a professional having research knowledge with considerable experience in the field (minimum 600 hours) as a Graduate Exercise Professional. It must have been accomplished in a health and fitness setting or equivalent, after bachelor graduation, or as part of the master programme. Note that a verified statement from the employer or any other duly qualified person in charge is compulsory.

Degree Content Requirements

Most master programmes in Europe comprise a total of (60+60=) 120 ECTS, although some countries have (60+30=) 90 ECTS. For this purpose, specific Exercise Sciences content must comprise of at least 45 credit points based on European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) total within a degree coming from each of the following academic areas:

- *Fundamental or Applied Physiology / Health Sciences for determined clinical conditions (minimum 3 credits)*
- *Fundamental or Applied Pedagogy / Psychology for determined clinical conditions (minimum 3 credits)*
- *Fundamental or Applied Biomechanics / Motor Control for determined clinical conditions (minimum 3 credits)*
- *Exercise Prescription, Fitness Testing and Exercise Implementation for Clinical Conditions (minimum 10 credits)*
- *Physical Activity and Health Promotion / Public Health for determined clinical conditions (minimum 4 credits)*
- *Exercise Science Research Methods and Analysis (minimum 4 credits)*
- *Optional contents with high relevance in a fitness or exercise setting (e.g., Nutrition, Management, Marketing/Sales, Leadership, Communication, Presentation, etc.) (minimum 3 credits)*
- *Fitness Practicum or Dissertation in Exercise Sciences applied to one of the populations with clinical conditions (minimum 15 credits).*

It should be noted that these contents may be embedded in a variety of papers, modules, or courses within a degree rather than as specifically nominated topics. On the other hand, the 45 ECTS required for the indicated academic areas may not have to be completed within the same academic programmes (e.g., MSc in Clinical Exercise Physiology, Exercise and Health Promotion, Physical Activity and Health, etc.). It means that a student can attend specific courses in other programmes/universities, in the case the degree does not fulfil the requirements (e.g., a Physical Education programme may not cover the contents about nutrition, thus the student may obtain those credits by attending classes in an exercise science programme/single course at another university or vocational training provider, in other period of time). A valid document stating the attendance of these courses and the achievement of all occupational knowledge and competencies specified for the Clinical Exercise Professional is obligatory to register at EREPS. Each person applying for EREPS registration at this level will be contacted by an 'assistant' in order to check the required documents, if needed. This may involve direct contact with the employer(s) or the academic staff of the person applying for registration.

Technical expert group members and external consultation experts

These standards were fully adopted within the process of external consultation and afterwards approved by the EuropeActive Professional Standards Committee.

TEG Members for the Requirements Profile of the Clinical Exercise Professional (EQF level 7), published in 2024:

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Essential skills of a Clinical Exercise Professional

Sector indicator	Skill (this professional is able to:)	Explanation
Service delivery	On board new users	Provide an essential new users fitness onboarding process to ensure understanding of fitness club rules/ policies. Provide all users with a fitness club induction in the safe and effective use of fitness equipment.
	Facilitate user motives and training goals related to the specific pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s)	Facilitate individual motives and resulting short, medium- and long-term fitness and health goals together with other health professionals who may be advising on exercise interventions.
	Collect detailed user information, particularly in relation to the user's specific pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s)	Collect detailed medical, lifestyle and other information and advise users of correct procedures, protocols, and risks prior to commencing physical assessment and exercising, taking into account users' specific health condition. Conduct basic research or analytical tasks like, e.g., evaluations, surveys, systematic reviews, validation of tools, protocols, etc., based on physical activity and exercise.
	Perform health screening and fitness assessments, taking into account the user's specific pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s)	Perform advanced fitness testing plus previous pre-exercise assessment and basic health screening for healthy populations and populations with determined pre-clinical and clinical conditions. Perform fundamental physical activity, movement and skill screening, risk factors screening, and sports specific exercise and fitness testing and prescription for the populations with specific pre-clinical and clinical conditions.
	Design exercise programmes following currently accepted exercise and health guidelines in relation to a specific pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s)	Develop programmes for individuals or groups of the population with specific pre-clinical and clinical conditions based on the current state of research.
	Plan and prepare an individual exercise session	Plan the exercise session suitable for the needs of the users, including the structure of the session, training variables and necessary equipment, in relation to a specific pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s).
	Conduct exercise sessions and provide safe instruction	Conduct safe and effective exercise sessions, providing instruction on exercise performance that follows correct and accepted exercise technique guidelines, as part of an ongoing long-term exercise programme focused on a specific pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s).
	Adapt exercise	Apply relevant exercise adaptations or options to facilitate needs, capabilities, and exercise progression as well as, improvements in an individual user's health status and specific pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s).
Meeting health and safety requirements	Provide and gain user's feedback, monitor, evaluate and modify exercise programmes in relation to any change in user health status	Using users' feedback and appropriate assessment tools monitor and evaluate, and where necessary, modify individual sessions and the overall exercise programme, in relation to any change in their health status, if necessary following health professional advice.
	Ensure user's safety	Observe users at all times and inform them where necessary about health and safety requirements and emergency procedures and, be able to deal with unforeseen accidents and emergencies. Provide support for lifesaving procedures, if required.
	Observe and correct users' exercise performance	Observe users and offer appropriate corrections to ensure equipment set up, exercise techniques and related procedures are safe and effective.

Communication, motivation and user service	Communicate with users with a pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s) regarding their training	Develop rapport and effective communication (i.e. constructive and positive feedback) in order to support individuals with a pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s) to begin, adhere and /or return to exercise programmes. Explain to client how their condition or medications impact on exercise, and the risks of sedentary behaviour, and provide strategies to manage any challenges to support exercise and fitness goals, and if necessary, refer the client to a specialty medical doctor.
	Motivate users with pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s) to maintain their commitment to the exercise programme	Use motivational tools during and between sessions to maintain commitment and accountability of users with pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s) to the exercise programme in the long-term and, to support the behavioural change process. Identify psychological barriers and commonly held beliefs of individuals with pre-clinical and clinical health conditions to increasing physical activity. Provide general mindset and stress management advice to support exercise and fitness goals, and if necessary, refer the client to a psychologist;
	Provide information on fitness training programmes	Provide clients with information on the characteristics and benefits of participation in given fitness training programmes.
	Promote a healthy lifestyle in populations with pre-clinical and clinical health conditions	Provide information about a healthy lifestyle and the benefits of physical activity in the management of pre-clinical and clinical health conditions, and if necessary, refer the client to a medical doctor or a physiotherapist.
	Promote user referral	Encourage and invite users to bring friends, family and others to fitness activities.
Equipment and tools (including digital technology)	Select equipment for a fitness session	Use equipment to conduct a fitness session, ensuring the efficiency, safety and attractiveness of different exercises and, compliance with industry and national and international guidelines for normal operating procedures.
	Use digital technology	Use appropriate digital technology (e.g. mobile apps, wearables, online software) and artificial intelligence to better individualize the exercise programme for users with pre-clinical and clinical health conditions, track their general activity levels, increase accountability, provide beneficial information, and enhance exercise participation and adherence.
Environment	Select and maintain a safe exercise environment	Assess risks to select and ensure the provision of a safe and clean exercise environment, whether delivering live or online, indoor or outdoor.
	Promote principles of sustainability	Identify the factors effecting the environmental impact of their role and how to improve that impact. Promote and implement sustainable practices.
Professional Technical Capacity	Demonstrate correct exercise technique	Display perfect exercise technique at all times (posture, range of motion, control, timing and form), especially for exercises performed with fitness equipment.

Professional Attitude	Demonstrate professional conduct	Work within the parameters given at EQF level 7, recognizing the standards and professional limitations that this provides, and ensuring essential personal skills and knowledge to be a Clinical Exercise Professional are maintained and updated in line with industry recognised ethical codes of practice. Be a positive role model at all times and keep up to date with industry developments. Supervise and provide guidance to other fitness professionals and provide support for management activities, if required.
	Cooperate with other professionals, in particular with health professionals, in relation to the users' pre-clinical and clinical health condition (s)	Integrate multidisciplinary teams of health professionals and other exercise professionals such as graduate exercise professionals, exercise physiologists, exercise specialists, personal trainers, fitness instructors, and sport coaches.
	Comply with applicable legal regulations	Comply with applicable legal regulations regarding the professional tasks of a Clinical Exercise Professional.
	Personal data management	Ensure confidentiality and management of data in compliance with national legislation, including data protection requirements.
	Demonstrate professional responsibility	Perform duties in an ethical manner. Ensure that users and other workers are treated with respect and that appropriate public liability insurance is in place at all times of instructing.
	Reflect upon own performance	Reflect upon professional task performance against best practice guidelines.
	Promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace	Ensure and respect an inclusive and equitable environment.
	Promote anti-doping in a fitness and physical activity environment	Uphold fitness facilities policies in relation to anti-doping.
Business, Marketing and Sales Skills	Apply business, marketing and sales skills	Apply business, marketing and sales strategies and tools to develop a business model and, establish market position and market advantage as a Clinical Exercise Professional.



EuropeActive *setting the standards for Europe*

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