

EUROPEAN

STANDARDS

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# EuropeActive Occupational Standards Summary Document

**Exercise in Pregnancy and Postpartum  
Lifelong Learning Standard\*  
(EQF Level 4)**

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## **Exercise in Pregnancy and Postpartum Lifelong Learning Standard\* (EQF Level 4)**

*\*Lifelong Learning Standard (LLL) definition describes the essential, knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy written as Learning Outcomes, required to work in the European Fitness and Physical Activity Sector as a professional qualified in the relevant field e.g. pregnancy and postpartum exercise. Qualification against a Lifelong Learning Standard does not alone give entry to the European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS) but can be recorded against an existing EREPS Member Profile.*

### **Introduction:**

The “Exercise in Pregnancy and Postpartum” LLL Standard is a modified version of the EuropeActive Standards for Pregnancy and Postnatal Exercise Specialist published in 2016. This update is a response to recent scientific evidence and official guidelines in the field of pre- and postnatal physical activity.

To increase the prevalence of exercise programs for pregnant and postpartum clients, this Standard is intended to be more accessible for a broader group of exercise professionals. With this aim and after careful analysis, the new document includes only those professional competences that are most needed on the labour market to work effectively and safely with a client in uncomplicated pregnancy or uncomplicated puerperium.

It has been observed in educational courses in previous years, that the postnatal exercise area and the learning outcomes associated with it are often treated marginally compared to the topic of prenatal exercise. Clients during pregnancy and after childbirth are two different populations requiring different skills and expertise from exercise professionals. Therefore, the updated Standards document, includes two separate educational modules: ‘Exercise in Pregnancy’ and ‘Exercise in Postpartum’. This will allow training providers to plan appropriately balanced educational programs. Comprehensive methods of learning outcome assessment have also been suggested, including the verification of practical skills in planning and conducting exercise programs.

An innovative element of the updated Standard is the assignment of ECVET and ECTS credits, reflecting the estimated workload needed to achieve the identified professional competences. The use of educational credits in this way will enable the easy accumulation and transfer of learners’ achievements, both in vocational training and in higher education and thereby, increase the flexibility of the individual career path.

It is believed that the changes introduced in the updated Standard will contribute to the quality of the training of exercise professionals working with pregnant and postpartum clients, and therefore, increase the level of physical activity and health of mothers and their children.

### **Role and scope:**

The role of the holder of ‘Exercise in Pregnancy and Postpartum’ LLL Certificate is to independently design and implement exercise programmes for clients with uncomplicated pregnancies and with an uncomplicated postpartum period (from the day of giving birth to about a year after giving birth). They can perform an exercise readiness screen, programme, and supervise group or individual exercise, and adapt different forms of exercise to each stage

of pregnancy and puerperium, in accordance with current exercise guidelines and physical fitness assessments. Such a professional has the skills to develop pre- and postnatal exercise programmes both for previously inactive and for very active clients. This professional can communicate with pregnant and postpartum clients and their obstetric care providers in the pre- and postnatal exercise programme design and implementation tasks.

The Exercise in Pregnancy and Postpartum' LLL Standard is informally referenced to the European Qualification Framework level 4.

### **Specific pre-requisites:**

- *EQF Level 3 Fitness Instructor or Group Fitness Instructor or equivalent accredited certification. Those wishing to deliver group exercise for pregnant and postpartum clients, must hold the appropriate discipline.*
- *EQF Level 4 Personal Trainer qualification or equivalent accredited certification is required as a prerequisite if the exercise professional wants to deliver personal training sessions with pregnant and postpartum clients.*
- *EQF Level 5 Exercise Specialist qualification or equivalent accredited certification is required as a minimum prerequisite if the exercise professional wants to deliver exercise programmes tailored for a complicated course of pregnancy or postpartum (e.g., for clients with gestational diabetes, hypertension, overweight).*
- *EQF Level 6 Graduated Exercise Professional qualification or equivalent accredited certification is required as a minimum prerequisite if the exercise professional wants to deliver extensive fitness assessments related to exercise sessions with pregnant and postpartum clients.*
- *If aquatic activities are planned, the adequate qualifications for conducting exercise in water are required.*
- *Working experience as an exercise professional is recommended as a prerequisite for the 'Exercise in Pregnancy and Postpartum' LLL Certificate.*

### **Technical expert group members and external consultation experts**

The Pregnancy and Postnatal Exercise Specialist Standards were fully adopted within the process of external consultation and afterwards approved by the EuropeActive Professional Standards Committee in 2016. The Standards were reviewed and renamed the Pregnancy and Postpartum Lifelong Learning Standard in 2021-22.

#### **TEG Members 2016:**

- *Prof. Rita Santos Rocha, PhD, ESDRM-IPS - Sport Sciences School of Rio Maior - Polytechnic Institute of Santarém, Rio Maior, Portugal (TEG Leader)*
- *Dr. Anna Szumilewicz, PhD, AWFIS - Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland*
- *Dr. Maria Perales, PhD, UCJC - Camilo José Cela University, Madrid, Spain*
- *Dr. Simona Pajaujiene, PhD, LSU - Lithuanian Sports University, Kaunas, Lithuania*

#### **Experts who participated in the external consultation process 2016:**

- *Alexis Batrakoulis, MSc, GRAFTS - Greek Aerobics and Fitness Training School, Greece*

- *Aneta Worska, MSc, AWFIS - Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland*
- *Athanasia Zourladani, Greece*
- *Barbara Arianna Borelli, ISSA - International Sports Sciences Association, Italy*
- *Charlotte Dean, BSc, Careers in Fitness, England*
- *Chidozie Emmanuel Mbada, PhD, Obafemi Awolowo, University College of Health Sciences, Department of Medical Rehabilitation, Nigeria*
- *Prof. Doriana Ioana Ciobanu, PT, PhD, University of Oradea, Faculty of Geography, Tourism and Sport, Department of Physical Education, Sport and Physical Therapy, Romania*
- *Fabio Grossi, MSc, PT, Pregnancy and Postnatal Exercise Specialist, ISSA - International Sports Sciences Association, Italy*
- *Flávia Yazigi, PhD, FMH-UL - Faculty of Human Kinetics, University of Lisbon, Brazil/Portugal*
- *Franco Alessandri - M.D. Obstetrician Gynecologist at San Martino Hospital, Gynecological Clinic Genoa, Italy*
- *Prof. Kari Bø, PhD, PT, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo, Norway*
- *Katrine Mari Owe, PhD, National Advisory Unit on Women's Health, Oslo, Norway*
- *Dr. Michelle Mottola, PhD, CSEP - Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology, Canada*
- *Prof. Sarah J. Moss, PhD, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa*
- *Maria-Raquel Silva, PhD, Faculty of Health Sciences, University Fernando Pessoa, Oporto, Portugal*
- *Marta Fernandes, BSc, Fitness Manager Go Fit, Portugal*
- *Mireia Pelaez, PhD, European University of the Atlantic, Spain*
- *Nina Ferrari, MSc, Cologne Centre for Prevention in Childhood and Youth/ Heart Centre Cologne, University Hospital of Cologne, Germany*
- *Prof. Ruben Barakat, PhD, UPM - Technical University of Madrid, Spain*
- *Sergio Simphronio, PhD, MD, Simph Medical Fitness Institute, Brazil/Spain*
- *Zoran Milanović, PhD, Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, University of Niš, Serbia*

### **TEG members 2021-22 review:**

- *Prof. Anna Szumilewicz, PhD, GUPES - Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland (TEG Leader)*
- *Prof. Rita Santos Rocha, PhD, ESDRM-IPSANTARÉM - Sport Sciences School of Rio Maior - Polytechnic Institute of Santarém, Rio Maior, Portugal*
- *Prof. Simona Pajaujiene, PhD, LSU - Lithuanian Sports University, Kaunas, Lithuania*

### **Experts who participated in the external consultation process in 2021-2022 review:**

- *Prof. Lou Atkinson, PhD, Aston University, Great Britain*
- *Prof. Kari Bø, PhD, physiotherapist and exercise scientist, Norwegian School of Sport Science, Norway*

- *Julian Berriman, MA, PSC Director, EuropeActive, Belgium*
- *Michelle Caira, Vivi Rocks, Switzerland or France*
- *Prof. Margie Davenport, PhD, University of Alberta, Canada*
- *Prof. Xian Guo, Beijing Sport University, China*
- *Prof. Lene Haakstad, PhD, Norwegian School of Sport Science, Norway*
- *John van Heel, EFAA/New Health Foundation, The Netherlands*
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- *Prof. Mireille van Poppel, University of Graz, Austria*
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- *Prof. Najmeh-Alsadat Shojaeian, Azad University of Bojnourd, Iran*
- *Maciej Tauber, MSc, Educational Research Institute, Warsaw, Poland*
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- *Mikael Witick, Trainer4You, Finland*
- *Aneta Worska, MSc, GUPES - Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland*
- *George Xiros, Studio One, Greece*

## Essential skills

<b>Module 1: Exercise in Pregnancy</b>	
<b>Units of learning</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b>
Theoretical basis of planning and conducting exercise programmes for pregnant clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Knows organisational and legal issues in terms of conducting prenatal exercise sessions or programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Understands morphological, physiological and biomechanical aspects of pregnancy and response to exercise.</i></li> <li>• <i>Understands psychosocial aspects of pregnancy and its impact on physical activity.</i></li> </ul>

Health issues and safety considerations related to pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Understands the preventive role of physical activity for the health of pregnant clients and their children</i></li> <li>• <i>Knows the limitations and contraindications to physical activity and exercise during pregnancy</i></li> <li>• <i>Understands the role of a healthy lifestyle for a healthy course of pregnancy</i></li> </ul>
Health screening and fitness assessment in pregnant clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Knows the rules and tools for fitness screening and assessment of pregnant clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to perform basic health screening and fitness assessments in pregnant clients</i></li> </ul>
Prescription, implementation, and adaptation of exercise for pregnant clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Understands rules of planning, conducting and monitoring exercise programmes for pregnant clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to properly design an exercise programme for pregnant clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to properly conduct, monitor and adapt an exercise programme for pregnant clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to incorporate the childbirth preparation exercises into the exercise programme</i></li> </ul>
Promotion of physical activity and healthy lifestyle during pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is able to provide pregnant clients with proper information before, during and after exercise sessions</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyle among pregnant clients, other exercise professionals and representatives from other sectors, including the health sector</i></li> </ul>

<b>Module 2: Exercise in Pregnancy</b>	
<b>Units of learning</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b>
Theoretical basis of planning and conducting exercise programmes for postpartum clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Knows organisational and legal issues in terms of conducting postnatal exercises</i></li> <li>• <i>Understands morphological, physiological, and biomechanical aspects of postpartum period and response to exercise</i></li> <li>• <i>Understands psychosocial aspects of postpartum period and impact of physical activity</i></li> </ul>
Health issues and safety considerations related to postpartum period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Understands the preventive role of physical activity for the health of postpartum clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Knows the limitations and contraindications to physical activity and exercise during postpartum period</i></li> <li>• <i>Understands the role of healthy lifestyle for proper course of puerperium</i></li> </ul>
Health screening and fitness assessment in postpartum clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Knows the rules and tools for fitness screening and assessment of postpartum clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to perform basic health screening and fitness assessments in postpartum clients</i></li> </ul>

<p>Prescription, implementation, and adaptation of exercise for postpartum clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Understands rules of planning, conducting, and monitoring exercise programmes for postpartum clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to properly design an exercise programme for postpartum clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to properly conduct, monitor and adapt an exercise programme for postpartum clients</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to implement exercises performed by postpartum clients with their infants</i></li> </ul>
<p>Promotion of physical activity and healthy lifestyle during postpartum period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is able to provide postpartum clients with proper information on physical activity before, during and after exercise sessions</i></li> <li>• <i>Is able to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyle among postpartum clients, other exercise professionals and representatives from other sectors, including the health sector</i></li> </ul>

A full copy of the Exercise in Pregnancy and Postpartum Standard is available to all training providers making a full application to become an accredited provider of EuropeActive or on request to all EuropeActive accredited training providers and members.

The full Standard also includes detailed Assessment Criteria for each Learning Outcome, recommended methods of Learning Outcomes assessment as well the number of educational credits (ECVET and ECTS) and recommended learning workload.



# EuropeActive

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