

Professionalism

Level 2 Providing a positive customer experience in the fitness environment

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Identify governing and/or professional bodies
- Outline the essential principles, values or ethical codes of practice laid out by governing and/or professional bodies
- Describe how an exercise and fitness instructor can keep knowledge and skills up to date
- Describe how to identify opportunities and requirements for career progression

Professional and governing bodies

There are some key governing and professional bodies that every instructor should be aware of, including:

- The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)
- The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA)
- UK Active
- The World Health Organisation (WHO)
- The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)
- The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)

The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)

REPs membership

- Achieved and maintained through gaining of nationally recognised qualifications and training
- Signifies that an exercise professional meets required standards of good practice

Instructors who join the register need to:

- Gain a recognised and approved qualification
- Demonstrate competence in their work environment
- Be committed to ongoing professional development
- Have public liability insurance
- Adhere to an industry accepted code of ethical conduct

The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)

The REPs code of ethical conduct defines good practice for professionals in the fitness industry by reflecting on the core values of:

- Rights
- Relationships
- Responsibilities
- Standards
- Safe working practices

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA)

CIMSPA is a development body that provides leadership, support and empowerment for professionals working in sport and physical activity and a single unified voice for the sector

CIMSPA holds two long term strategic priorities:

- To provide opportunities for young leaders to develop and succeed
- To provide leadership on the development and management of career pathways

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA)

CIMSPA's vision statement is:

'To develop a vibrant, UK wide sport and physical activity sector, led by professionals providing advocacy and leadership and working in partnership with its stakeholders to help ensure the highest standards of service delivery'

UK Active

- Vision - to get more people, more active, more often
- Committed to improving the health of the nation through promoting active lifestyles
- Serve any organisation with a role to play in, or benefit to be gained from getting more people, more active, more often
- Membership includes leisure centres, leisure trusts, outdoor fitness providers, trainers, sports providers, training providers, lifestyle companies, equipment suppliers and charities
- Work with a large range of organisations to promote the benefits of being active

World Health Organisation

Goal - build a better, healthier future for people all over the world

Working in more than 150 countries, alongside governments and other partners to ensure the highest attainable level of health for all people

Main priority areas relevant to the health and fitness sector:

- Health systems
- Non-communicable diseases
- Promoting health through the life-course

World Health Organisation

Health systems - working together with policy-makers, global health partners, civil society, academia and the private sector to support countries to develop health plans and facilitate access to affordable, safe and effective healthcare

Non-communicable diseases – looking for solutions to heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, chronic lung disease and mental health conditions

Promoting health through the life-course - addressing environment risks and social determinants of health, as well as gender, equity and human rights

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE's role is to improve outcomes for people using the NHS and other public health and social care services by:

- Producing evidence-based guidance and advice for health, public health and social care practitioners
- Developing quality standards for those providing and commissioning health, public health and social care services
- Providing a range of information services for commissioners, practitioners and managers across the spectrum of health and social care

American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)

- Largest sports medicine and exercise science organisation in the world
- Dedicated to advancing scientific research to provide educational and practical applications of exercise science and sports medicine
- Provides position stands and opinion statements, published in 'Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise' (official journal of ACSM)
- Provides guidance and recommendations related to sport and exercise

Equality and diversity

Instructors have an obligation to promote equality and diversity in the workplace

Equality is ensuring that individuals (or groups of individuals) are treated fairly, equally and no less favourably regardless of issues such as race, gender, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation or age

Diversity is recognising, respecting and valuing people's differences, and promoting an inclusive culture in which everyone can realise their full potential

Equality and diversity

An instructor can promote equality and diversity by:

- Treating all customers and clients fairly
- Creating an inclusive culture for all customers
- Ensuring equal access to exercise and activity opportunities
- Enabling all clients to exercise to their full potential
- Ensuring that the exercise environment does not discriminate against any individuals or groups
- Ensuring procedures do not discriminate against any individuals or groups

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act defines nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Scope of practice

Instructors are only allowed to work within the limits of their qualifications and competence

Level 2 instructors can work with apparently healthy adults

To work with specific population groups (children, older adults, pre/post-natal, disabled) an instructor must have a level 3 qualification. A level 2 instructor should refer anyone from the special population groups to an appropriately qualified instructor

Confidentiality

An instructor will have access to confidential customer information

This can include personal details, medical information, personal information relating to lifestyle or family matters

Instructors are duty bound to not share data and to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the customer showing discretion in dealing with confidential matters

Data protection

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1988, instructors are under a legal obligation to ensure where possible that any data including computerised, electronic and manual records are stored securely and not disclosed to any party without the customer's consent

Failure to do so could result in a compensation claim made by the participant for breach of confidentiality

An instructor also has a moral responsibility not to discuss with a third party any matters relating to the customer without consent

Keeping knowledge and skills up to date

Keeping work-based knowledge and skills up to date is called continuous professional development (CPD)

CPD is the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge and experience that are gained formally and informally

CPD can help instructors:

- Keep up-to-date with current changes relevant to their roles (e.g. legislation, regulations)
- Identify achievements throughout the year

Keeping knowledge and skills up to date

CPD can be:

- Formal training courses
- Informal training
- In-house training
- Work experience, job shadowing
- Reading journals, books or magazines
- Researching on the internet

Record all CPD in a diary or your organisation may have a CPD log

Information on career progression

External sources

- REPS
- Colleges
- Universities
- Active leisure conferences and exhibitions

Internal sources

- Human resources
- Job descriptions and specifications
- Line managers, supervisors, general managers
- Organisation notice boards or intranet

Career progression

There are many career pathways for a gym instructor to follow, including:

- Personal trainer
- Specialise in GP referral or pre-and post-natal clients
- Group exercise
- Yoga or Pilates teacher
- Duty manager/deputy manager