



Physical Literacy

TECHNICAL SPECIALISM PROFESSIONAL STANDARD



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Evidencing this technical
specialism professional
standard increases
professional status for:

PRACTITIONERS

1. Overview

1.1 Technical specialism professional standard: Physical literacy

This Professional Standard outlines the environment specialism of Physical Literacy and the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that are needed to lead Physical Literacy-informed sessions.

The standard is designed for sport and physical activity professionals who plan and lead individuals and/or groups through intentionally designed sessions that aim to support the ongoing development of Physical Literacy.

Those working within the sport and physical activity sector, for example Coaches or Personal Trainers, can plan and deliver Physical Literacy-informed sessions to meet the individual needs of the participants.

It is important to note that this standard is designed to support practitioners with planning and delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions and is not suggesting that Physical Literacy is a topic that can be delivered or taught.

This standard provides guidance for the development of educational products that can be submitted for CIMSPA endorsement.

This standard can also be a useful tool for employers to curate job descriptions, use as an appraisal tool, help with training needs analysis or for developing career planning frameworks.

The Physical Literacy technical specialism standard covers job roles that sit within the sport and physical activity sector as part of all industries.

This professional standard is underpinned by the principles of inclusive practice, equity, and respect for individual dignity. Those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions are expected to recognise and respond to the diversity of individuals' backgrounds, lived experiences and health journeys.

1.2 Endorsed qualification logo

Education products that evidence the competency statements of this CIMSPA professional standard will display this CIMSPA endorsement logo.



2. Technical specialism competence and professional status

2.1 Prerequisites

It is expected that to achieve this technical standard the learner will have achieved a prerequisite qualification. Individuals that have met an occupational professional standard relevant to this technical specialism are encouraged to continue to develop their expertise by undertaking further training that is mapped to this Physical Literacy technical standard.

For example, an individual might have evidenced the Coach occupation professional standard prior to undertaking the Physical Literacy Technical Specialism.

CIMSPA occupation professional standards can be found here:

[CIMSPA professional standards library](#)

2.2 What those who have evidenced this professional standard know and can do

This standard is intended for sport and physical activity professionals who design and lead sessions that nurture the ongoing development of Physical Literacy. Practitioners working in the sport and physical sector (Coaches, Personal Training etc.) can use this standard to help plan and deliver sessions tailored to participants' individual needs, nurturing personalised and inclusive sport and physical activity opportunities. The focus is on helping professionals integrate Physical Literacy into their practice, rather than treating it as a subject to be directly taught.

Individuals that meet this professional standard understand:

- how to intentionally plan and deliver Physical Literacy-informed sessions, ensuring a holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable environment
- how to reflect on their sessions using Physical Literacy as a reflective framework.

Individuals that meet this professional standard have demonstrated:

- the ability to intentionally plan and deliver Physical Literacy-informed sessions, considering a holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable environment
- the ability to reflect on their sessions using Physical Literacy as a reflective framework.

2.3 Professional status

Once an individual has demonstrated competence of all evidence statements within this professional standard they will be eligible to be issued higher grades of professional status.

An example of the higher grade of professional status that can be issued are shown in the table below:

Occupation professional standard	Technical specialism professional standard(s)	Professional status grade
Coach	+ Physical Literacy	Coach Advanced Practitioner
Personal Trainer	+ Physical Literacy	Personal Trainer Advanced Practitioner

3. Standard-specific product development guidance

3.1 CIMSPA product development guidance

CIMSPA education partners developing education products that evidence completion of this professional standard should reference the following guidance.

[CIMSPA Product Development Guidance](#)

3.2 Education product combinations and uses

This professional standard can be used as follows:

- combined with an occupation standard to form an education product, for example:
 - occupation: Coach
 - technical specialism: Physical Literacy
- combined with an occupation standard and additional specialism(s) to form an educational product:
 - occupation: Coach
 - population specialism: Working with Children
 - technical specialism: Physical Literacy
- as a standalone product that can be completed as continuous professional development, for example:
 - Supporting Practitioners to Deliver Physical Literacy-informed Sessions.

3.3 Assessment minimums

Education partners should determine the total qualification time for the qualification/unit and outline the minimum requirements for practical assessment.

For the Physical Literacy technical specialism, the minimum practical requirements have been outlined as below.

Knowledge and understanding

Education partners need to ensure that all the knowledge and understanding learning and assessment requirements are assessed via [formative](#) or [summative](#) assessment. A sufficient range of these requirements must be assessed via summative assessment.

Skills

All learners must be assessed summatively against all the skill-related learning and assessment requirements, that they can consistently undertake the following:

- Plan holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable Physical Literacy-informed sessions that are developmentally appropriate and aligned to the participant's needs.
- Deliver holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable Physical Literacy-informed sessions that are developmentally appropriate and aligned to the participant's needs.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of the Physical Literacy-informed sessions, both during and after, by evaluating the cognitive, social, physical and affective aspects of learning.

This information will be captured within the mapping document and reviewed as part of the CIMSPA endorsement process to ensure suitability.

3.4 Assessment authenticity

It is essential that practical assessment is authentic.

Practical assessment must be conducted where possible in a real-world environment – ideally, ‘on the job’ at work, or an environment that is as close to being as ‘real world’ as possible.

- Practical assessments should be conducted using suitable participants.
- Where possible these participants should be those the learner regularly coaches or teaches, or similar types of participants.
- To maintain authenticity the participants must not be friends or family, and where practically possible not other learners.

For the Physical Literacy technical specialism this could include, for example: undertaking coaching sessions with a group of children (population) in a school or community setting (environment).

Reasonable adjustments can be applied where specific circumstances make this impractical, for example delivery in the prison sector.

3.5 Quality assurance

Education providers must ensure that their quality assurance meets the appropriate regulators’ guidance. This includes internal and external quality assurance processes, appropriate staffing requirements and assessment generation/evidence.

3.6 Level descriptors

The table below shows level descriptors and explanations of what can be expected from a learner on completion of an education product evidencing knowledge, understanding and skills related to the technical specialism of:

- Physical Literacy

These are intended to be directive, rather than prescriptive, to avoid simply reproducing identical language in the education partner’s design approach, without considering the intent and purpose of the education partner’s product and therefore help with benchmarking expected outcomes.

For this standard the level descriptor is:

- Higher Technical (level 4 equivalent)

Further information

Education providers seeking CIMSPA endorsement for a product against this occupation professional standard are asked to determine and justify the level of the product they have developed, in line with guidance provided by the level descriptor below.

Where a provider is seeking CPD endorsement, covering part of the professional standard with competency assessment included, the same level of assessment rigour must be applied as described in the level descriptors. Evidence of the type and rigour of assessment must be presented as part of CIMSPA’s CPD endorsement process.

Please refer to the [product development guidance](#) for further information.

Level Descriptors Higher Technical (level 4 equivalent)

Descriptors	Generic operational context
Responsibility and level of expected autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for courses of action. • Take responsibility for the work of others within parameters of the defined role.
Representative tasks and duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of resources (including other team members where appropriate) within scope of role. • Exercise responsibility, autonomy, and judgement within broad but well-defined parameters.
Level of knowledge and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates practical, theoretical, and technical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine. • Ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. • Awareness of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work. • Has an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.
Professional and practical skills (level of complexity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical, technological, and conceptual depth of knowledge and understanding. • Identify, adapt, and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally well-defined. • Awareness and adoption/application of relevant research into daily tasks.
Transferable skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions, and results. • Adaptable behaviour. • Ethical awareness. • Solves problems which are complex and non-routine but well-defined.

4. Learning and assessment requirements

4.1 Key areas

This section outlines the key areas of learning and assessment (knowledge, understanding and skills) that should be contained within any educational product seeking CIMSPA endorsement against this technical specialism professional standard.

There are two key areas of knowledge, understanding and skills for the technical specialism of:

- Physical Literacy

Both are interconnected and mandatory. The key areas are:

- Key area 1: Technical knowledge for Physical Literacy-informed sessions
- Key area 2: Plan, deliver and reflect upon Physical Literacy-informed sessions

4.2 Assessment coverage

Where examples: “for example” are used in the competency statement tables below this is to provide an overview of the knowledge, understanding and skills most relevant to the role – it is not mandatory to assess learners against 100% of the examples provided.

However, sufficient coverage to ensure occupational competence on achievement must be ensured. This will be reviewed as part of the CIMSPA endorsement process.

Key area 1: Technical knowledge for Physical Literacy-informed sessions

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Competency statements – those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions must:
K1.1.1	Definition of Physical Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explain the background and underlying philosophy (monism, existentialism and phenomenology) of Physical Literacy. This should include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– the emphasis on holistic development through the cognitive, physical, social and affective domains of learning– the importance of positive and meaningful physical activity experiences in shaping values, habits, attitudes and beliefs about physical activity– the individual and unique nature of a Physical Literacy journey in shaping preferences, values and attitudes towards physical activity.
K1.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyse the variations and interpretations of Physical Literacy, including its foundations, and challenge misconceptions such as Physical Literacy as synonymous with fundamental movement skills.
K1.1.3		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore appropriate definitions and apply in relation to the learner's context.

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Competency statements – those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions must:
K1.2.1	Key principles of Physical Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the key principles associated with Physical Literacy, including those within the THRIVE acronym: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tailored – programmes and/or sessions are bespoke and planned with the participants in mind, including their developmental needs and preferences – Holistic – programmes and/or sessions support the development of the cognitive, social, physical and affective aspects of learning – Reflective – programmes and/or sessions are reflected upon to consider how they support the ongoing development of Physical Literacy – Inclusive – programmes and/or sessions are designed to support inclusivity, making reasonable adjustments and adaptations where appropriate to ensure all participants feel a sense of belonging and fulfil their potential – Varied – programmes and/or sessions are informed by a variety of pedagogical approaches to maintain interest and support motivation but also to guard against early specialisation or overuse/overtraining – Empowering – programmes and/or sessions should be designed to continue to inspire the promote a positive relationship with movement and physical activity.
K1.2.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the importance of a person-centred approach, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – participant voice and co-design – programmes and/or sessions should utilise participant voice in evaluation and design – motivational and supportive environments – programmes and/or sessions should encourage participants to feel safe, encouraged, empowered to learn, grow and contribute positively – how making progress on their own Physical Literacy journey should be encouraged instead of comparison with others.

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Competency statements – those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions must:
K1.3	Benefits of Physical Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the benefits associated with Physical Literacy-informed practice, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the benefits of a holistic approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The importance of lifelong engagement in physical activity and a healthy and physically active lifestyle (using a variety of examples supporting the development of the cognitive domain) ○ Increased confidence and self-esteem (using a variety of examples supporting the development of the affective domain) ○ Development of physical competency (using a variety of examples supporting the development of the physical domain) ○ Social benefits (using a variety of examples supporting the development of the social domain) – the benefits of understanding previous lived experiences and meeting participants where they are – the importance of facilitating positive and meaningful physical activity experiences in shaping values, attitudes and beliefs about physical activity – the benefits of a person centred and inclusive environment that takes into consideration individual differences and preferences.

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Competency statements – those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions must:
K1.4.1	Application of Physical Literacy principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how the deliberate address of Physical Literacy principles can be applied to a range of different stakeholders, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – parents and carers – volunteers – coaches – educators – participants – physical activity professionals – allied health professionals – the wider community – for example, youth organisations.
K1.4.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how the implementation of a Physical Literacy-informed approach may vary across different contexts such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – informal sport and physical activity settings – formal sport and physical activity settings – leisure and recreation – fitness and health.

Key area 2: Plan, deliver and reflect on Physical Literacy-informed sessions

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Competency statements – those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions must:
K2.1.1	The participant(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify aspects about individual participant(s) that are important to consider prior to any holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable Physical Literacy-informed session, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – motivations – previous experience and ability – personal background – medical history.
K2.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider how to build and sustain a positive relationship and motivational climate with participants.
K2.2	Planning Physical Literacy-informed sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe how to plan holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable Physical Literacy-informed sessions, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – holistic aims and learning objectives – including how the cognitive, social, physical and affective aspects of learning, combined with the participants' previous experiences, are all considered to influence the development of Physical Literacy – how inclusive activities should be planned to ensure that all participants are suitably challenged with clear adaptations taking into consideration individual preferences and differences – considering how to ensure activities are safe – for example making sure activities are developmentally appropriate or providing psychological safety through low stakes environments or the careful and considered use of competition – suitable and progressive activities which will promote positive engagement and a meaningful relationship with movement and sport and physical activity.

Ref	Knowledge and understanding	Competency statements – those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions must:
K2.3	Delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how to deliver holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable Physical Literacy-informed sessions, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – careful consideration of session structure – what informed the rationale of the design of the learning episodes/cycles and activities, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ exploring linear and non-linear approaches (direct instruction or guided discovery), models-based practice or a constraints-led approach ○ how to facilitate smooth transitions, take into consideration prior learning, scan and support participants and or ensure activities are suitably adapted and progressed – how to design and deliver activities that support holistic learning development – how to deliver planned activities to promote a positive and meaningful relationship with movement and physical activity for life – understanding the social and cultural factors that influence engagement in physical activity and planning appropriate activities that are relevant and meaningful to participants – the importance of adapting Physical Literacy-informed sessions where required to meet the needs of the individual participants.
K2.4	Reflection of Physical Literacy-informed session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how to reflect upon holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable Physical Literacy-informed sessions, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reflecting on the effectiveness of the sessions during and after, systematically asking whether cognitive, social, physical and affective domains of learning are or have been developed – identifying how to improve the planning and delivery of future Physical Literacy-informed sessions – considering whether all participants were included within the session ensuring they were appropriately challenged, supported and made progress that was of value to them as individuals – evaluation of whether the session facilitated a motivational climate and facilitated positive and meaningful engagement.

Ref	Skills	Competency statements – those delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions must:
S2.1	Planning Physical Literacy-informed sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an ability to plan Physical Literacy-informed sessions, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – relevant aims and learning objectives focussed on cognitive, social, physical and affective aspects of participants' learning – suitable and developmentally appropriate activities which will promote a positive and meaningful relationship with movement and physical activity for life – a consideration for inclusivity including providing adaptations and progressive practices to facilitate progress and appropriate challenge.
S2.2.1	Delivering Physical Literacy-informed sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver holistic, inclusive, safe and enjoyable sessions which incorporate the key principles of Physical Literacy.
S2.2.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate clear and observable efforts to support holistic development, inclusivity and participant engagement.
S2.3.1	Reflection of Physical Literacy-informed sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect upon the Physical Literacy-informed sessions by systematically evaluating the progress of participants towards the cognitive, social, physical and affective aspects of learning.
S2.3.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect upon the inclusivity of the session, progress of participants and levels of engagement.
S2.3.3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify strengths and areas for development for the Physical Literacy-informed sessions to improve the planning and delivery of future sessions.
S2.3.4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect upon ongoing professional development needs and further opportunity to support development.
S2.3.5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to make appropriate, sensitive and informed judgements / recommendations that support the assessment of or the charting of Physical Literacy progress.

5. Glossary

Term	Definition
Affective domain	An aspect of learning that is related to the development of emotions and intrapersonal skills, including expression, understanding, and regulation. Examples may include, resilience, confidence, motivation, etc.
Cognitive domain	An aspect of learning that focuses on knowledge acquisition and the development of thinking skills. Examples may include, creativity, decision making, planning, etc.
Enjoyable	A pleasurable and engaging environment, characterised by active participation.
Formative assessment	Also known as assessment for learning, this is an ongoing, developmental process that takes place during teaching and learning. It helps tutors and learners identify strengths, weaknesses, and progress, allowing teaching to be adapted and learners to respond to feedback. Formative assessments are designed to support learning without directly contributing to final grades and can be either formal or informal.
Holistic	Holistic development refers to nurturing the physical, affective, social and cognitive domains which in turn supports overall growth.
Inclusive	A supportive and welcoming environment where all participants feel valued, feel a sense of belonging and have the opportunity to reach their potential.

Term	Definition
Intervention strategies	The deliberate act of planning and providing participants with targeted feedback, adaptations, support, and/or to facilitate an appropriate level of challenge to promote learning and enjoyment.
Learning	A process of acquiring knowledge, understanding, behaviours, skills, values, attitudes or preferences. Individuals will acquire, develop, consolidate and apply learning throughout the sessions. Learning can take place across all learning domains including cognitive, social, affective and physical.
Physical domain	An aspect of learning that includes psychomotor development, physical competence, motor control and sensory development. Examples, may include developmentally appropriate, perceptual-motor skills, fundamental movement skills, the development of components of fitness and posture, sport-specific skills, etc.
Safe	A safe sport and physical activity environment is one that is free from physical and emotional harm, whereby proactive measures have been taken before, during and after the session to ensure the well-being of all the participants.

Term	Definition
Social domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An aspect of learning that includes the interpersonal skills to be able to interact effectively and compassionately with others, promoting healthy social connections and well-being.
Summative assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also known as assessment of learning, this is an evaluative process that measures what a learner has achieved at the end of a period of learning (for example a unit, module, or course). It evaluates performance against clear, published criteria to determine how well the learner has met the intended learning outcomes.
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a positive state of mind and body, underpinned by social and psychological wellbeing. It enables and supports good relationships, improved resilience, improved health, meaning, purpose and control.

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Shaping a recognised, valued
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