



Position Statement: Scope of Practice for Registered Exercise Professionals



1. Introduction

Fitness Australia, the National Health and Fitness Industry Association, governs and administers the National Exercise Professional Registration System. The aim of the system is to ensure that registered exercise professionals practice in accordance with national professional standards and subsequently safeguard the health and interests of people using exercise professional services.

Exercise professionals registered with Fitness Australia provide a variety of exercise services for a range of clientele across many varied settings. Competency to practice is represented through the registration category held and associated continuing education completed.

This position statement aims to define the scope of practice for a registered exercise professional and provide clarity in regard to role and responsibility. As fitness services in Australia are becoming increasingly connected to community, education, sport and broader health service delivery, this document will also provide guidance for collaborative practice with professionals across broader health and community service delivery systems.

Importantly, it is intended that this scope of practice for registered exercise professionals does not impede innovative practice, stifle opportunities for adaptation to a changing environment or limit consumer access to participate in services.

2. The Role of a Registered Exercise Professional

A member of the public may utilise fitness services as a leisure or recreation activity, to compliment sporting pursuits, as a means of community participation, or to help prevent or to improve health problems. As such, a registered exercise professional plays a significant role in enhancing the overall quality of life of individuals and communities and is a contributor to an individual's healthcare continuum.

The core role of a Registered Exercise Professional is to plan and deliver safe and effective exercise programs for individuals and/or groups. A Registered Exercise Professional undertakes one or more of the following roles:

- Personal Trainer
- Gym Instructor
- Group Exercise Instructor
- Group Exercise Leader

Competency in delivering specific activities within these roles is obtained through qualification and/or approved continuing education. Exercise Professional Registration practice is based on verification of initial and continuing competence.

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Industry role characteristics

Personal Trainer

- Typically works independently (may be self-employed or an employee) and may support or lead other registered exercise professionals
- Typically practices within a fitness facility but also in a wide variety of other environments (including unpredictable settings such as outdoor locations, client homes, community spaces, workplaces)
- Provides individually tailored client assessments, program development, instruction and demonstration, supervised exercise sessions and client reviews. Maintains consistent monitoring and support for clients (including between sessions)
- May deliver exercise programs designed for participation by a group of clients with a mix of ages/fitness levels
- Typically manages both business and client needs e.g. promoting and selling services, as well as delivering services

Gym Instructor

- Works within predictable settings such as a fitness facility, recreation or community facilities
- Provides individually tailored client assessments, program development, program demonstration and client reviews
- Provides supervision of a facility or service (i.e. observing client use of facilities, providing technique correction as needed, keeping equipment clean/tidy/well-maintained, being available for customer inquiries or assistance)
- Typically reports to a manager but is not always directly supervised during work duties

Group Exercise Instructor

- Delivers exercise sessions designed for participation by a group of clients with a mix of ages/fitness levels (i.e. not tailored to individuals)
- Exercise sessions delivered may be freestyle, pre-choreographed or circuit style
- Instructs and demonstrates complete exercise sessions to groups with limited individual interaction
- Instructor typically practices independently and commonly reports to a manager
- Commonly conducts sessions that are part of an overall regular timetable of sessions provided by the employer organisation
- Typically instructs sessions in predictable settings such as group exercise studios within fitness facilities

Group Exercise Leader

- The scope of this role is limited to leading pre-designed group exercise sessions.

3. Qualification and Continuing Education

Registered Exercise Professionals are required to complete the minimum level vocational qualification or equivalent higher education qualification for category specific registration and to hold current senior level first aid and CPR certifications. Exercise delivery competency can be enhanced through completion of Fitness Australia approved continuing education programs.

Ongoing Registration requires exercise professionals to maintain currency of skills and knowledge through approved continuing education, evidence of relevant professional practice and currency of first aid and CPR certification.

4. Clientele

Registered Exercise Professionals are qualified to plan and deliver exercise for low and moderate risk clientele based on the guidelines defined in the Adult Pre-exercise Screening system (APSS) document.*

Registered Exercise Professionals may work with higher risk clientele (whose conditions are stabilised and managed) after making a written referral to and receiving documented guidance on the exercise program from the clients' treating medical and/or allied health practitioner.

Registered Exercise Professionals should refer to the nationally endorsed APSS to stratify client risk and determine appropriate exercise intensity for physical activities based on the client's risk classification.

5. Settings

The services of a Registered Exercise Professional may be conducted in a variety of indoor and outdoor settings including fitness centres or studios, community centres, aquatic facilities, healthcare facilities, workplaces, a client's home, sports facilities, or public space such as parks, beaches and recreational areas. Competency to deliver in a particular setting is gained through initial qualification and/or approved continuing education.

Registered Exercise Professionals are required to adhere to all relevant industry codes of practice and ethics, legislative or statutory requirements (refer to section 8).

* Exercise and Sports Medicine Australia, Fitness Australia and Sports Medicine Australia (2011) Adult Pre-Exercise Screening System V1.

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6. Professional Scope and Boundaries

6.1 A Registered Exercise Professional with the categories Personal Trainer, Gym Instructor and/or Group Exercise Instructor has a scope of practice that includes:

- A. Pre-exercise health screening
- B. Safety and risk assessment and management
- C. Application of first aid to clients where required
- D. Fitness assessment and analysis in accordance with knowledge and skill obtained through qualification and/or continuing education
- E. Development of safe, effective and appropriate exercise programs tailored to client or group needs
- F. Exercise delivery inclusive of demonstrating, instructing, monitoring, reviewing and modifying program content including technique, method and progression
- G. Working within professional limitations to provide basic healthy eating information and advice through the application of nationally endorsed nutritional standards and guidelines.
- H. Provision of general nationally endorsed public health information that will educate and support positive client health outcomes

6.2 The scope of practice for a Registered Exercise Professional with the Personal Trainer category also includes:

- A. Use of evidence based protocols to enhance client exercise adherence through goal setting, motivation, guidance, social support, relapse prevention and feedback
- B. Referring to medical or allied health professionals for guidance. Utilising best practice referral/ feedback processes to optimise client health outcomes

6.3 The scope of practice for a Registered Exercise Professional with the Group Exercise Leader category is limited to:

- A. Pre-exercise screening
- B. Safety and risk assessment and management
- C. Application of first aid to clients where required
- D. Leading pre-designed group exercise sessions inclusive of demonstrating, instructing and monitoring client participation within pre-designed program content parameters

6.4 The Registered Exercise Professional Scope of Practice does not include:

- A. Provision of nutritional advice outside of basic healthy eating information and nationally endorsed nutritional standards and guidelines
- B. Therapeutic treatment or independent rehabilitative exercise prescription
- C. Independent exercise prescription for high risk clients
- D. Diagnostic tests or procedures
- E. Sports coaching
- F. Psychological Counselling

7. Professional and Ethical Practice

Registered Exercise Professionals agree to abide by the Fitness Australia Registered Exercise Professional Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics outlines terms for professional practice across:

- Relationship with and responsibilities to clients
- Professional Integrity
- Professional Relationships and Responsibilities
- Professional Standards

The Code of Ethics also outlines a complaint resolution, disciplinary and appeals process.

8. Legislation and Regulations

The Registered Exercise Professional scope of practice is influenced by local regulatory frameworks and as such, registered exercise professionals must adhere to regulations including (but not limited to):

- A. Jurisdictional OH&S legislation
- B. Civil Liability Law
- C. Privacy Law
- D. Consumer Law
- E. Anti-discrimination Law
- F. Criminal Law – this may include a national criminal history record check or working with children check
- G. Local government policy for the use of public space for exercise service delivery
- H. Other relevant setting-specific policies or regulations