

Pearson BTEC HNC/D

Programme Specification
Sport and Exercise Science
2025 - 2027

1. Final Award	
Level 4 HNC and Level 5 HND	
2. Programme Title	
Sport and Exercise Science	
3. Internal Programme Title	
Sport and Exercise Science	
4. Intermediate / Exit Awards	
4a. Award	4b. Title
Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma	
5. Awarding Institution / Body	
BTEC - Pearson	
6. Programme Delivered By	
University Centre St. Helens	
7. Location of Delivery	
Knowsley Campus, Stockbridge Lane, Huyton L36 3SD	
8. Framework	
Higher Education Unit/Modular delivery	
9. Mode of Study	
Full-time in person	
10. Forms of Study	

Classroom / Gym, Work-Based inc.(practice / placement)

11. Normal length of study

HNC 1 year full-time – HND 2 years full-time.

12. Maximum length of study

3 Years.

13. Frequency of intake / starting month

Annual - September

14. UCAS Code

15. JACS and/or HECoS Code

16. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check Required?

Yes

17. Faculty & Department

17a. Faculty

Year Years, Health and Care

17b. Department

Sport and Exercise Sciences

18. Subject Benchmarking Group

Events, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Health Studies

19. Professional Recognition By (if applicable)

Pearson - BTEC

20. Name of Module Assessment Board (MAB)

Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences

21. Date of Approval

To be confirmed

22. Educational Aims of the Programme

Aim 1: To enable students to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of Exercise, Health and Fitness in a coherent and progressive manner.

Aim 2: To develop a range of skills & techniques, personal qualities and attitudes appropriate for successful transition into an appropriate career in the Exercise, Health and Fitness industry.

Aim 3: To provide opportunities for students to develop their understanding of Exercise, Health and Fitness through both academic and practical reflective practice.

Aim 4: To widen access by providing opportunities for progression onto further educational routes and industry and to provide students with specialist knowledge, intellectual aptitude, enhanced awareness and key skills required to succeed within higher education.

Aim 5: To develop strong external links within the Exercise, Health and Fitness industry to provide students with access to a range of valuable work-based learning opportunities.

Aim 6: Following completion at Level 5, to produce graduates who are able to assimilate, evaluate and critically appraise information and to provide them with a range of skills to support future employment and life-long learning.

Key Features

UCSH wishes to provide students with a stimulating and challenging programme of study that will be both engaging and memorable for students.

- The essential subject knowledge that students need to progress successfully into further study or the world of work.
- A simplified structure: students undertake a substantial core of learning in the Higher National Certificate and can build on this in the Higher National Diploma, with optional units linked to their specialist area of study.
- Specialist pathways in the Level 5 Diploma, so there is something to suit each student's preference of study and future progression plans.
- Refreshed content that is closely aligned with Professional Body, employer and higher education needs.
- Assessments that consider cognitive skills (what students know) along with affective and applied skills (respectively how they behave and what they can do)
- Unit-specific grading and Pearson-set assignments.
- A varied approach to assessment that supports progression to Level 6 and also allows centres to offer assessment relevant to the local economy, thereby accommodating and enhancing different learning experiences.
- Quality assurance measures – as outlined in Pearson Programme Specification – to ensure that all stakeholders (e.g. professional bodies, universities, colleges and students) can feel confident in the integrity and value of the qualifications.
- A qualification designed to meet the needs and expectations of students aspiring to work in an international environment.

Course Objectives

To equip students with Sport & Exercise Science skills, knowledge and the understanding necessary to achieve high performance in the global Sport & Exercise Science environment.

- To provide education and training for a range of careers in Sport & Exercise Science, including Exercise Referral Instructor, Advanced Coach, Sports Performance Assistant.
- To provide insight and understanding into the diversity of roles within Sport & Exercise Science, recognising the importance of collaboration at all levels.
- To equip students with knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values.
- To provide opportunities for students to enter or progress in employment in Sport & Exercise Science, or progress to higher education qualifications such as an Honours degree in Sport & Exercise Science or a related area.
- To provide opportunities for students to develop the skills, techniques and personal attributes essential for successful working lives.
- To support students to understand the local, regional and global context of Sport & Exercise Science and, for those students with a global outlook, to aspire to international career pathways.
- To provide students with opportunities to address contemporary issues facing the industry, and society at large; with particular emphasis on sustainability and the environment, recognising the role that Sport & Exercise Science plays in addressing these issues.

To provide opportunities for students to achieve a nationally-recognised professional qualification within their chosen area of specialisation.

- To provide opportunities for students to achieve vendor accredited certifications.
- To offer students the chance of career progression in their chosen field, with particular emphasis on achieving management-level positions, professional recognition and beyond.
- To allow flexibility of study and to meet local or specialist needs.
- To offer a balance between employability skills and the knowledge essential for students with entrepreneurial, employment or academic aspirations.
- To provide students with opportunities to engage in an industry-recognised apprenticeship scheme that aligns with their employer's needs and their own career aspirations.
- To provide students with the context in which to consider professional ethics and their relation to personal, professional and statutory responsibilities within the industry.

We meet these objectives by:

- Providing a thorough grounding in Sport & Exercise Science principles at Level 4 that leads the student to a range of specialist progression pathways at Level 5 relating to individual professions within the Sport & Exercise Science sector
- Equipping individuals with commercial acumen, understanding and Sport & Exercise Science skills for success in a range of roles in Sport & Exercise Science
- Enabling progression to a university degree by supporting the development of appropriate academic study skills
- Enabling progression to further professional qualifications in specific Sport & Exercise Science areas by mapping to units in a range of professional Sport & Exercise Science qualifications

Aims of the Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Sport & Exercise Science

Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Sport & Exercise Science also offers the following two specialist pathways for students who wish to concentrate on a particular aspect of Sport & Exercise Science:

- Coaching Science
- Exercise, Health & Lifestyle.

There is also a non-specialist 'General Sport & Exercise Science' pathway, which allows students to complete a Level 4 Higher National Certificate without committing to a particular professional specialism. This offers additional flexibility to providers and students. At Level 4, students develop a broad knowledge and awareness of key aspects of Sport & Exercise Science through four Core units, which include one unit assessed by a Pearson-set assignment.

The units are:

- Nutrition
- Fundamentals of Sport & Exercise Psychology
- Anatomy & Physiology
- Professional Skills (Pearson-set unit).

Depending on the specialist pathway, at Level 4, students will undertake a further two Specialist units (related to their Level 4 Pathway) from:

- Coaching Practice & Skill Development
- Training, Fitness, Testing
- Physical Activity, Lifestyle & Health
- Lifestyle Coaching

Students can also choose two further Optional units at Level 4 from the following:

- Biomechanics
- Technology in Sport
- Injury Prevention
- Community Coaching
- Sports Massage.

Aims of the Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Sport & Exercise Science

The Level 5 Higher National Diploma offers the following specialist pathways for students who wish to concentrate on a particular aspect of Sport & Exercise Science:

- Coaching Science
- Exercise, Health & Lifestyle.

There is also a non-specialist 'General Sport & Exercise Science' pathway, which allows students to complete a Level 5 Higher National Diploma without committing to a particular professional specialism. This offers additional flexibility to providers and students. Holders of the Level 5 Higher National Diploma will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. They will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to perform effectively in their chosen field and will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Progression

The Level 5 Higher National Diploma is recognised by Higher Education providers as meeting admission requirements to many relevant Sport & Exercise Science-related courses, for example:

- BA (Hons) Sport & Fitness Studies
- BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science
- BSc (Hons) Sports Studies. Students should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes at specific Higher Education providers. After completing a BTEC Higher National Certificate or Diploma, students can also progress directly into employment.

24b. Module Structure

The programme structures specify:

- The total credit value of the qualification
- The minimum credit to be achieved at the level of the qualification
- The core units
- The specialist units
- The optional units
- The maximum credit value in units that can be centre commissioned

UNIT TITLE	UNIT CODE	UNIT NUMBER	
		HNC Sport & Exercise Science	HNC Sport
Nutrition	Y/616/0950	1	10
Physical Activity, Lifestyle & Health	J/616/0930	7	1
Biomechanics		9	12
Anatomy & Physiology	D/616/0951	3	11
Technology in Sport	K/616/0953	10	13
		HND Sport & Exercise Science	HND Sport
Research Project	L/616/0962	14	23
Entrepreneurism in Sport	R/616/0963	30	24
Performance Analysis	M/616/1053	16	32
Physical Literacy	L/616/1058	23	33
Advanced Coaching	J/616/1060	15	34
Teaching Practice	L/616/1061	29	35
Personal & Professional Development	Y/616/1063	24	36
Work Experience	H/616/1065	25	37
Exercise Physiology	M/616/1067	26	38
Advanced Nutrition	J/616/1074	27	41

Developing Maths, English and Digital Capabilities

Development of essential Maths and English skills are embedded throughout these qualifications in accordance with industry requirements and below are some examples of how these skills are developed in the BTEC Higher National curriculum:

- Written reports
- Formal presentations
- Informal conversations
- Use of professional, sector specific language

Employability Skills

Where employability skills are referred to in this specification, this generally refers to skills in five main categories:

- Cognitive and problem-solving skills: critical thinking, approaching non-routine problems by applying expert and creative solutions, use of systems and digital technology, generating and communicating ideas creatively.
- Intra-personal skills: self-management, adaptability and resilience, self monitoring and self-development, self-analysis and reflection, planning and prioritising.
- Interpersonal skills: effective communication and articulation of information, working collaboratively, negotiating and influencing, self-presentation.
- Commercial skills: sector awareness; sales; marketing/promotion; budget management/monitoring;
- Business skills: awareness of types of companies, company formation, invoicing, calculating fees, business management.

Wider academic skills

Students can also benefit from opportunities for deeper learning, where they are able to make connections between units and select areas of interest for detailed study. In this way BTEC Higher Nationals provide a vocational context in which students can develop the knowledge and academic study skills required for progression to university degree courses, including:

- Active research skills
- Effective writing skills
- Analytical skills
- Critical thinking
- Creative problem-solving
- Decision-making
- Team building
- Exam preparation skills
- Digital literacy
- Competence in assessment methods used in higher education.

26. Admission Requirements

The programme intends to recruit students from a varied range of backgrounds and experience. Application for admission to the programme will normally be through UCAS and all suitably qualified applicants will be considered.

Applicants should possess a minimum of 5 GCSEs grades A, B or C including English Language, mathematics and a science.

Standard entry onto the programme will require the equivalent or one or more of the following:

- Successful completion of related 'A' level study with a minimum of two subjects passed or equivalent to 80 UCAS points
- National Diploma in Sports Science / Sports Development or related field equivalent to 80 UCAS points
- NVQ Level 3 in related field and related occupational experience

A UCAS tariff score of 80 is required for standard entry to this programme.

Offers of a place on the programme will not be based solely upon academic qualifications alone and skills gained in the workplace will also be considered. The final decision in terms of acceptance onto the programme will lie with the programme leader. **For review.**

28. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

The programme's learning and teaching methods are based upon the following core values:

That students' prior knowledge and experience should be utilised in the learning process at every opportunity.

That students are enabled to develop from relatively dependent to more independent learners as the programme progresses.

That teaching and learning methods clearly reflect the transition from dependence to independence and are balanced accordingly at each phase of the programme.

That variety in teaching and learning stimulus is crucial to the promotion of effective learning.

That students are provided with appropriate levels of support throughout their programme to enable them to evolve into autonomous learners.

As such, teaching and learning methods employed will be balanced between tutor-centred and student-centred activities that enable conformity to the above core values. The following range of teaching and learning methods will be employed:

Lecture – This is used to impart a specific body of knowledge to students. In most cases, theoretical concepts generated by lectures will be developed through supporting seminars (including use of multi-media presentations, video presentations and, where appropriate, guest speakers).

Practical Work – This is where the students acquire practical skills to enable the measurement and evaluation of fitness, health and exercise prescription.

Seminars – This functions as a forum for the presentation and dissemination of topics. This is student focused where students will present information on a selected topic to the students.

Self-Directed Learning – The concept of independent study is an integral part of the programme. It refers to the idea of student centred learning, whereby the student takes responsibility for setting his or her own goals and creating his or her own pathway of study within the framework of the course. With this in mind, the programme team will act more as facilitators, enabling and encouraging learning by developing study skills, suggesting areas of investigation and research, and providing academic advice and counselling.

Written Work – The course involves a range of written assignments. These include essays, laboratory reports, projects and case studies.

Group Work – Certain assignments may require students to work together or in pairs, to practice or demonstrate learning or to initiate investigation and / or deliver presentations.

Visiting Lecturers – Students benefit from contact with a wide range of professional activities through direct contact with specialists involved in the fitness/health sector to introduce students to up to date and practical information/techniques.

Individual Tutorials – This system is an extremely important element linked to the rationale of teaching, learning and assessment at University Centre St. Helens, Knowsley Campus. The individual needs of the student are effectively analysed with the aim to provide a clear pathway of learning to incorporate the style which most suits the student. These tutorials can be activated at the request of the tutor or individual student, and can be utilised in addition to the mandatory tutorials afforded to each and every individual student on the course. This process has also been informed by feedback from past and current students who have identified how advice relating to achieving learning outcomes and utilising appropriate study techniques has been invaluable in supporting them towards achieving independent study and the results associated with this.

Types of assessment opportunity provided by the programmes include:

Coursework Assignment: includes traditional essay (with word limit), portfolio work, case study, reflective practice log, preparation of reports, analysis of research data, preparing a research proposal and practical observations. Assessments are where possible/appropriate based around consideration of authentic problems and challenges with the aim to demonstrate use of evidence based practice.

Formal Examination: typically represented by examinations of up to 2 hours applied at the end of a module. This could be a multiple choice, short answer, an essay or a combination of these formats.

Presentation: including individual and or paired presentation based upon assigned and selected topics.

Work Based Learning: A work placement assessment includes, work placement logs and mentor feedback, a reflective portfolio and personal and professional developmental action planning.

Formative assessment is utilised as appropriate across the programme to support and gauge student progress and may include submission of essay plans, question and answer sessions, discussions and debates.

The strategic approach to assessment within the programme reflects a move from more practically based/reflective assessment at level 4 study towards a more theoretical/evaluative approach that requires evidence of ability to cite appropriate reading/research evidence. This ensures that students are prepared for the option of progression to a third year of study.

29. Careers and Employability

On completion of the programme graduates will have the background knowledge and skills to achieve career progression in the fitness, leisure and health sectors. Vocations such as advanced fitness instructor, personal trainer, exercise referral specialists, health promotion workers, health and well-being advisors and other allied physical activity roles are typical of the careers graduates will be able to enter into. All students will have developed relevant background knowledge and skills to provide opportunity for progression onto a third year of a relevant Honours Degree programme.

In addition, industry-recognised qualifications gained on the programme, including the Level 2 Certificate in Fitness Instructing and the Level 3 Certificate in Personal Training, will further equip graduates with the work

based skills that will have the potential to attract employers.

30. Equality

University Centre St. Helens (UCSH) respects diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity. UCSH strives to ensure that no student receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of social background, age, disability, gender, sexuality, marital status, race, religion, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origin. UCSH will take positive steps to eliminate any issues of discrimination and continue the drive to increase levels of under-represented groups and promote equality in students' admissions and their experience at UCSH. No student should be disadvantaged by unjustifiable conditions or requirements. It is the responsibility of all students to implement and support this policy. All students of UCSH are expected to treat each other with respect, as well as staff and visitors. Action will be taken in the case of unlawful and/or unacceptable behaviour by students. The monitoring of progress against the policy is the responsibility of the Equality & Diversity Committee.

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