



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 rectify or prevent 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.

A Registered Exercise Professional may practice any activity that falls within the broad scope of practice providing that they have been deemed appropriately qualified and competent to practice. 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/abilities
- 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/abilities (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 predesigned 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 extended 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 work independently with low to moderate risk clientele and with higher risk clientele (whose conditions are stabilised and well managed), under documented guidance from the client's treating medical and/or allied health practitioner.

The Adult Pre-Exercise Screening System (APSS) provides a nationally endorsed method for risk stratification, with reference to the following criteria:

Type of Risk	Low Risk Clientele	Moderate Risk Clientele	High Risk Clientele
Major or uncontrolled cardiovascular, metabolic and respiratory diseases,			
Signs and symptoms of disease, or other medical issues that represent a substantial risk when beginning or upgrading physical activity patterns			
Genetic, lifestyle, behavioural risk factors or other conditions that are important to know when prescribing physical activity	Less than 2 	2 or more 	Combination of risk factors or an extreme risk factor requiring further medical guidance 

Norton, K., & Norton, L. (2011). *Pre-Exercise Screening: Guide to the Australian adult pre-exercise screening system*, Exercise and Sports Science Australia, Fitness Australia and Sports Medicine Australia.

Competency to deliver to specific population groups is gained through approved initial qualification and/or continuing education.

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, 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 legislative or statutory requirements (refer to section 8).

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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. Provision of general non-medical nutrition information in accordance with nationally endorsed evidence based guidelines. The advice and information provided is general and not individually tailored
- 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. Engaging with medical or allied health professionals and 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 predesigned group exercise sessions inclusive of demonstrating, instructing and monitoring client participation within predesigned program content parameters

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

- A. Provision of personalised dietary advice outside of nationally endorsed guidelines; individual nutritional assessment and development of personalised meal plans
- B. Prescription of nutritional supplements or medicines
- C. Therapeutic treatment or independent rehabilitative exercise prescription
- D. Independent exercise prescription for high risk clients
- E. Diagnostic tests or procedures
- F. Sports coaching
- G. Psychological Counselling

7. Professional and Ethical Practice

Registered Exercise Professionals agree to abide by the Fitness Australia 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