USP52M
Health, safety and welfare in a fitness environment

Unit reference number: M/507/5599
Level: 2
Guided Learning (GL) hours: 16

Overview
This unit provides the foundation knowledge of health, safety and welfare required to work in an exercise and fitness environment. Learners will develop the knowledge to identify and manage risks and follow emergency procedures in accordance with their professional role boundaries. Learners will also develop their understanding of how to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in a fitness environment.

Learning outcomes
On completion of this unit, learners will:

LO1 Know emergency procedures in a fitness environment
LO2 Know health and safety requirements in a fitness environment
LO3 Know how to control risks in a fitness environment
LO4 Know how to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
Assessment requirements

Learners must complete both assessment requirements related to this unit:

1. External examination
2. Graded synoptic assessment

1. External examination

The theory content of LO1 – LO4 will be tested by an external examination at the end of the period of learning.

External examinations will test knowledge and understanding from across the whole vocational area (mandatory units). Learners should use the unit content section of this unit to aid revision since exam questions will test the full breadth of this section.

External examinations will be set and marked by VTCT and will contribute to the overall qualification grade.

2. Graded synoptic assessment

In the last term or final third of their qualification, learners will be required to undertake a graded synoptic assessment. This will require learners to carry out a range of activities from across the whole vocational area (mandatory units). Assessment coverage will vary year on year, although all activities will be covered over time.

VTCT will set a brief for centres which will detail the activities to be covered in the graded synoptic assessment. Grading descriptors for the synoptic assessment will also be provided by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will be marked and graded by centre staff and externally verified by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will contribute to the overall qualification grade.
Unit content

LO1 Know emergency procedures in a fitness environment

Learners must know the different types of emergencies that can happen in a fitness environment:
- First aid – accidental injury (sprain, strain, bleeding), medical conditions (angina, heart attack, asthma attack, epilepsy)
- Accidents – using equipment, trips, slips, falls
- Fire – building, electrical equipment, flammable products
- Missing person – child, disabled person, vulnerable adult
- Other – suspected bomb, chemical spillage, theft, security issues (breaking and entering), abuse

Learners must know the roles of staff and external services when dealing with accidents and emergencies:
- Instructor – deal with situation when it arises within limits of own responsibility, refer situation if necessary, report emergency and complete incident report form
- Receptionist – contact emergency services, contact duty manager and duty first aider as required, meet and direct emergency services to location
- Line/duty manager – complete incident/report form according to organisation requirements
- First aider – deal with first aid accidents and emergencies
- Paramedic – treat medical emergency
- Police – investigate missing person, theft of belongings, security issues, abuse (verbal or physical)
- Fire Service – investigate, resolve and make safe fire emergency

Learners must know the importance of following emergency procedures when dealing with accidents and emergencies:
- To ensure the emergency is resolved
- To maintain the health and safety of all clients and staff
- To ensure all staff responsibilities are clearly located and followed
- To ensure the emergency is reported and recorded
- To meet legislative requirements

Learners must know how to maintain the safety of people involved in accidents and emergencies:
- Stop the fitness activity, provide information to keep people informed
- Direct to a safe environment (other area, first aid room, fire assembly point)
- Contact appropriate personnel (line manager, emergency services, first aider, parent or guardian, significant others)
- Consider needs of specific populations (disabilities, older adult, children) and ensure appropriate procedures are in place for managing special populations
LO2 Know health and safety procedures in a fitness environment

Learners must know the importance of health and safety:
- To protect clients and staff
- To ensure provision of safe and effective equipment
- To ensure safe and hygienic premises
- To meet health and safety legislative requirements and industry standards/codes of ethical practice

Learners must know the legal and regulatory requirements for health and safety in a fitness environment:
- Health and Safety at Work act (1974) and other legislation, e.g. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, Manual handling, Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, Electricity at Work Regulations, First Aid Regulations
- Equalities Act (2010) and disability discrimination legislation
- Other – Law of Tort, occupiers’ liability, REPs Code of Conduct, employee and public liability insurance, organisation policies and procedures, DBS (previously CRB) checks

Learners must know their duty of care and professional role boundaries:
- Duty of care (ensure no unreasonable harm or loss, three criteria for negligence), greater duty of care with vulnerable adults (over 18 years and in need of community care services, mental or other disability, unable to care for self, potential for exploitation), greater duty of care with clients undergoing special physiological lifespan processes (ageing, childhood, antenatal, postnatal)
- Professional role boundaries
  - Screening and informed consent
  - Ensuring safety of self and others
  - Adequate professional insurance
  - Appropriate record keeping (adhering to confidentiality and data protection)
  - Work in areas of competence. Level 2 fitness instructors are unable to practise or advertise as a special populations instructor, unable to instruct special population clients on one to one or group basis, unable to plan a progressive and long term special population activity programme, health screened and asymptomatic special populations may be accommodated on an occasional basis within mainstream exercise sessions, clients must be informed of instructor role boundaries and given the choice to participate, instructors should obtain relevant qualifications if regularly working with special population clients, insurance policies must cover the instruction of special populations
  - Other referral sources for maintaining professional role boundaries (Code of Ethics, REPs Code of Conduct, general practitioner, physiotherapist, registered dietitian, registered nutritionist, first aider, line manager)
Learners must know the roles and responsibilities of individuals for maintaining health and safety in the workplace:

- Instructors/trainers – equipment and facility checks, service and maintenance, completing and recording specific activity risk assessments, maintaining safe practice during exercise provision
- Managers/health and safety officer – monitor health and safety practice, maintain and review risk assessments, review organisational health and safety policy, update staff on health and safety policy
- Health and safety executive – inspection and review of organisation’s health and safety procedures and practice

Learners must know the different types of security procedures that may apply in a fitness environment:

- Controlled and recorded reception access/departure, CCTV coverage of public areas, entrances and exits
- Lockable storage for personal valuables
- Locked storage of maintenance and cleaning products
- Locked doors to areas with restricted public access
- Locked storage of client data records
- Opening and closing procedures
- Fire and evacuation procedures, fire alarm testing

Learners must know the key health and safety documents in a fitness environment:

- Organisation health and safety policy
- Risk assessment
- Accident/incident report form
- First aid book
- Screening and informed consent records
- Equipment and facility maintenance and service records
LO3 Know how to control risks in a fitness environment

Learners must know the possible hazards in a fitness environment:
- Facilities – slippery or uneven floor surfaces, obstructed floor areas, fire, space and overcrowding, temperature
- Equipment – broken, improper technical use, maintenance
- Working practices – inappropriate exercise type and intensity, improper exercise technique, lifting, handling
- Client – health and screening issues, medical conditions, behaviour (e.g. abusive behaviour or equipment misuse)
- Security – unauthorised persons, theft, suspected bomb
- Hygiene – cross-infection, contact with hazardous cleaning and maintenance products
- Other – anything else that may cause harm

Learners must know different methods of risk assessment:
- Informal – visual inspection and appraisal of possible hazards, verbal screening of clients, identification of who may be harmed
- Formal – written completion of risk assessment form (hazards, harm potential, people affected, risk severity, risk frequency, risk rating (low, medium, high, very high), appropriate actions and additional control measures (eliminate, reduce, isolate, protective clothing), review of risks

Learners must know how to manage and control risks:
- Facilities (e.g. cleaning and maintenance schedule, appropriate activities, sufficient floor area, location of fire exits, location of fire extinguishers, serviced fire extinguishers, storage of flammable products, organisational procedure for fire emergency)
- Equipment – appropriate layout and spacing around equipment, service and maintenance schedule undertaken and recorded, out of order equipment clearly marked, correct technical instruction
- Working practices – induction, correct technical instruction, appropriate exercise type and intensity, correct lifting and handling technique, gym floor supervision
- Client – screening, suitable client footwear and clothing, behaviour (e.g. rules and standards information, no chewing gum or jewellery)
- Security – controlled reception access, locked fire and emergency doors, alarm systems, supervision on gym floor
- First aid – qualified first aider, replenished first aid kit, location of nearest first aid kit, organisational procedure for medical emergency
- Hygiene – regular cleaning schedule, clothing guidelines for clients, client hygiene information, changing-room checks

Learners must know the appropriate personnel to refer to for assistance in managing risks outside of personal authority:
- Line manager
- Organisation health and safety manager
- First aider
- Lifeguard
- External services
- Health and safety executive
- Fire officer
- Safeguarding officer
LO4 Know how to safeguard children and vulnerable adults

Learners must know key features of safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults:

- Protecting from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health and development, ensuring provision of safe and effective care, ensuring optimum life chances

Learners must know the responsibilities and limitations of their role in safeguarding:

- Responsibility of fitness instructor – duty of care to safeguard children and adults during provision of service. Refer suspected and reported abuse to the designated employee
- Limitations – refer but not deal with suspected or reported abuse

Learners must know the different types of abuse and possible signs and symptoms:

- Physical – hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating, causing physical harm, forcing training and competition exceeding the capacity of the body, giving drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty
- Emotional – constant criticism, name calling, sarcasm, bullying, under constant pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards
- Neglect – not ensuring safety, exposure to undue cold or heat, exposure to unnecessary risk of injury
- Bullying – name calling, insults, verbal abuse, being deliberately embarrassed and humiliated by others, being made to feel different, being lied about, being physically assaulted or threatened with violence, being ignored
- Sexual – forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, involving people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

Possible signs of abuse

- Physical – unexplained recurrent injuries or burns, probable excuses or refusal to explain injuries, wearing clothes to cover injuries, refusal to undress for exercise, bald patches, chronic running away, fear of medical help or examination, self-destructive tendencies, aggression towards others, fear of physical contact
- Emotional – physical, mental and emotional development lags, sudden speech disorders, continual self-depreciation, overreaction to mistakes, extreme fear of any new situation, inappropriate response to pain, neurotic behaviour, extremes of passivity or aggression
- Neglect – constant hunger, poor personal hygiene, constant tiredness, poor state of clothing, untreated medical problems, no social relationships, destructive tendencies
- Bullying – become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence, become distressed and anxious, stop eating, attempt or threaten suicide, have their possessions go missing, refuse to talk about problems, have unexplained bruises and cuts, begin to bully others, become aggressive and unreasonable
- Sexual – distracted, sudden mood swings, exhibit or mimic sexual behaviours, poor self or body image, resist changing clothes, wetting and soiling accidents, self-injury and harm
Learners must know the policies, procedures and reporting procedures for managing suspected abuse:

- Policies for a specific fitness organisation – safeguarding children, safeguarding vulnerable adults, protection from accusations of abuse

- Statutory agencies – Social services, Police, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Ofsted, Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) associated roles and responsibilities

- When to contact statutory agencies (when abuse is suspected and/or when abuse has been reported)

- Maintaining confidentiality – follow organisational procedures, refer to designated member of staff, use a safe and private place to discuss the issue with professional staff member, record and store details according to data protection legislation
Skin cancer awareness

Please note this information will not be assessed for the achievement of this unit. Public awareness of skin cancer has never been higher, and yet skin cancer remains the fastest growing cancer in the UK, especially amongst young people. The chances of a positive outcome can be dramatically increased with early identification and diagnosis.

Professionals in hair, beauty, sports massage and health and wellbeing industries work closely with clients and in many cases have sight of areas of skin which may not be easily visible to the client. An informed awareness of the signs, symptoms and changes of appearance to be aware of when checking for early signs of cancer is a crucial tool for the conscientious practitioner in order to provide the most thorough service and in some cases, possibly lifesaving information signposting.

Signs to look for when checking moles include utilising the ABCDE guide:

A - Asymmetry – the two halves of the area/mole may differ in their shape and not match.

B - Border – the edges of the mole area may be irregular or blurred and sometimes show notches or look ‘ragged’.

C - Colour – this may be uneven and patchy. Different shades of black, brown and pink may be seen.

D - Diameter – most but not all melanomas are at least 6mm in diameter. If any mole gets bigger or changes see your doctor.

E - Elevation/evolving – elevation means the mole is raised above the surface and has an uneven surface. Looks different from the rest or changing in size, shape or colour. Anyone can get a suspicious mole or patch of skin checked out for free by the NHS by visiting their doctor, who may then refer to a dermatologist (an expert in diagnosing skin cancer).

If you require any additional NHS information please refer to https://www.nhs.uk/be-clear-on-cancer/symptoms/skin-cancer

If your learners are interested in learning more about skin cancer awareness alongside this qualification, VTCT runs the following qualification: VTCT Level 2 Award in Skin Cancer Awareness for Non-Healthcare Professionals.

This qualification has been specifically designed for those working in the sports massage, health and wellbeing, beauty, hairdressing and barbering sectors. It will enable learners to identify any changes to their client’s skin and to highlight those changes to the client using appropriate language and communication skills. It will enable the learner to raise awareness of skin cancer and signpost their clients to public information about skin cancer.

This qualification will enable hair, beauty and wellbeing professionals to gain the appropriate knowledge and communication skills required to provide non-diagnostic, professional advice and information to clients in a discrete, empathetic and confidential manner.

For more information please refer to the Record of Assessment book: https://qualifications.vtct.org.uk/finder/qualfinder/1Record%20of%20Assessment%20Book/AG20529.pdf
Resources

The special resources required for this unit are access to a real or realistic working environment which supports the undertaking of health and safety and risk assessments. Best practice should be encouraged by giving learners the opportunity to assess risks and hazards in real environments e.g. leisure centres and gyms. However, as this is not always possible and may create barriers to learning, learners may carry out risk assessments in simulated environments.

Learners must have access to appropriate health and safety policy documentation, e.g. risk assessment reports, code of ethical practice, incident report forms and examples of workplace policies and procedures.

Recommended websites:
- REPs code of ethical conduct – [www.exerciseregister.org.uk](http://www.exerciseregister.org.uk)
- Scotland (Disclosure) – [http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/apply/employers](http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/apply/employers)

Delivery guidance

Teachers are encouraged to use innovative, practical and engaging delivery methods to enhance the learning experience. Learners may benefit from:
- Interactive workshops that enable exploration of hazards and risks in different exercise and fitness environments
- The completion of risk assessment tools provided by the health and safety executive to prepare for planning and instructing units
- Presentations and discussion forums by guest speakers from emergency services or statutory agencies
- Practical role play workshops, participating in the management of different emergency situations and completion of relevant accident and incident reporting forms
Links with other units

This unit is closely linked with the following units:

**USP54M Planning gym-based exercise**

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of health and safety when planning and preparing for gym-based exercise sessions in a real or realistic working environment. Some content of the health, safety and welfare unit (risk assessment) will need to be delivered prior to delivery of the planning gym-based exercise unit.

**USP55M Instructing gym-based exercise**

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of health and safety when providing gym-based exercise sessions in a real or realistic working environment. Some content of the health, safety and welfare unit (risk assessment) will need to be delivered prior to delivery of the instructing gym-based exercise unit.

**USP56M Programming personal training with clients**

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of health and safety when programming personal training with clients in a real or realistic working environment. The health, safety and welfare unit (risk assessment) will need to be delivered prior to delivery of the programming personal training unit.

**USP57M Delivering personal training sessions**

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of health and safety when delivering personal training sessions in a real or realistic working environment. The health, safety and welfare unit (risk assessment) will need to be delivered prior to delivery of the delivering personal training unit.

**Graded synoptic assessment**

At the end of the qualification of which this unit forms part, there will be a graded synoptic assessment which will assess the learner’s ability to identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from a number of units from within the qualification. It is therefore necessary and important that units are delivered and assessed together and synoptically to prepare learners suitably for their final graded assessment.
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