

Higher Certificate in
**Exercise
Science**

* Admission Requirements:
NQF 4 qualification

🕒 Duration: 12 Months

SAQA ID: 91830

⏏ NQF 5

🏆 123 Credits

Ⓡ Accredited: CHE

✓ Endorsed by:
REPSSA; ICREPS

🕒 Full Time

Higher Certificate in Exercise Science (NQF 5)

SAQA ID: 91830

🏆 123 Credits

Overview

The Higher Certificate in Exercise Science (HCES) – NQF5, is a Higher Education qualification which qualifies you as a Personal Trainer and Sports Conditioning Coach and gives an introduction to working with Special Population Groups (such as the young and elderly).

The HCES leads to the Advanced Certificate in Exercise Science (ACES) – NQF 6 The Advanced Certificate covers High Performance Training, Advanced Strength and Conditioning and Special Population Groups (including those with certain medical conditions). This opens up further employment opportunities in Health, Fitness and Sport.

Learning Outcomes

Successful learners will be able to:

- ▶ Design, implement and manage a physical activity programme for apparently healthy individuals, groups or special populations (sufferers from hypertension, obesity, diabetes and orthopaedic conditions) and the elderly, and apply knowledge thereof to appropriately refer specific clients to other health care providers when seen to be necessary
- ▶ Screen, assess, monitor and manage health related wellness programmes under indirect supervision
- ▶ Promote and provide safe and effective physical activity plans specific to individual participants' requirements
- ▶ Provide educated advice on lifestyle changes to improved well-being of relevant clients
- ▶ Promote and provide nutritional advice within the scope of healthy eating guidelines
- ▶ Apply the relevant legal and managerial skills to promote themselves as small business entrepreneurs within the professional personal fitness training framework
- ▶ Further your own knowledge, scope of practice and career opportunities by continuing your professional development through specialisation courses

Job Opportunities

- ▶ **Fitness Instructor in a large wellness and fitness facility**
- ▶ **Personal Trainer**
- ▶ **Sports Conditioning Coach**



Accreditations

HFPA is registered by the Department of Education as a private higher education provider. This programme is accredited by the HEQC and the council for Higher Education (CHE)

Endorsed by

REPSSA – Register of Exercise Professionals South Africa

Admission Requirements

Applicants are admitted to the Higher Certificate in Exercise Science if they meet one of the following minimum admission requirements:

- ▶ National Senior Certificate (NSC) with Higher Certificate endorsement, together with compliance with the English language proficiency requirements of HFPA. Applicants should achieve a minimum of 30% in English and meet the minimum NSC requirements for admission to Higher Certificate studies.
- ▶ A National Certificate (Vocational) at NQF Level 4 with Higher Certificate endorsement, together with compliance with the English language proficiency requirements of HFPA.
- ▶ An equivalent school-leaving qualification, such as the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) National Senior Certificate, or another recognised qualification that provides access to Higher Certificate studies, together with compliance with the English language proficiency requirements of HFPA.
- ▶ A Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) at NQF Level 4 in a cognate field, such as exercise science, fitness, coaching, sport, health, or wellness.
- ▶ Under specified conditions, an Occupational Certificate at NQF Level 4 in a relevant cognate field may be considered for admission, together with appropriate and verifiable industry experience, in accordance with the HFPA Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy.



Curriculum



ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY :

The Anatomy and Physiology module provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the structure and function of the human body as it relates to exercise, movement, and physical performance. Students explore the major body systems and the principles of biomechanics to understand how the body responds and adapts to physical activity. This knowledge forms the scientific foundation for safe exercise instruction, effective programme design, and evidence-based practice within the health, fitness, and exercise industry.



ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAMMING:

This module develops students' ability to assess client health and fitness, interpret assessment results, and design safe, individualised exercise programmes that meet specific goals and needs. Students gain practical skills in conducting fitness assessments, setting realistic objectives, prescribing exercise, and monitoring client progress. This module prepares students to apply evidence-based assessment and programming principles to support health, fitness, performance, and long-term behaviour change across a variety of client populations.



ENTREPREUNERSHIP:

This module equips students with the knowledge and practical skills to identify business opportunities, develop innovative solutions, and establish sustainable ventures within the health, fitness, and sport industries. Students explore the principles of entrepreneurial thinking, business planning, marketing, financial management, and small business operations while developing the confidence to transform ideas into successful enterprises. The module fosters innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that prepare graduates to create, manage, and grow businesses in an evolving professional environment.



EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY:

This module provides students with an understanding of the psychological factors that influence participation in physical activity, exercise, and healthy lifestyle behaviours. Students explore topics such as motivation, behaviour change, exercise adherence, stress management, and psychological wellbeing, while learning how to apply evidence-based strategies to support and motivate clients. The module equips students with the skills to promote long-term behaviour change, enhance client engagement, and improve health and wellness outcomes across a range of exercise and fitness settings.



NUTRITION AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:

The module provides students with a foundational understanding of the principles of nutrition and healthy weight management in relation to exercise, health, and wellbeing. Students explore the role of nutrition in supporting physical activity, body composition, and overall health, while learning to provide evidence-informed nutrition guidance within the recognised scope of practice of a fitness professional. The module equips students to promote healthy lifestyle behaviours and support clients in achieving sustainable health and weight management goals.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Special Considerations module equips students with the knowledge and skills to safely adapt exercise programmes for individuals with diverse health conditions, abilities, and stages of life. Students explore the principles of exercise prescription for children, older adults, and individuals with chronic diseases, disabilities, and other special populations, while applying evidence-based approaches to promote safe participation in physical activity. The module prepares students to deliver inclusive, client-centred exercise programmes that support health, wellbeing, and quality of life within their recognised scope of practice.



THE FITNESS ENVIRONMENT:

The module provides students with the knowledge and practical skills required to operate effectively within the health and fitness industry. Students develop an understanding of fitness facility operations, business administration, client service, professional practice, and entrepreneurship. The module equips students to work confidently as fitness professionals, independent contractors, or business owners by developing the administrative, operational, and business management skills needed to succeed in a dynamic and competitive industry.

ELECTIVES

EXERCISE IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS:

The module develops students' understanding of how environmental conditions influence exercise performance, safety, and programme design. Students explore the physiological responses and practical considerations associated with exercising in a range of settings, including indoor and outdoor environments, heat, cold, altitude, and aquatic environments. The module equips students to adapt exercise programmes appropriately, apply effective risk management strategies, and promote safe participation in physical activity across diverse environmental conditions.



SPORT CONDITIONING:

The Sport Conditioning module introduces students to the principles and practices of physical conditioning for sport performance. Students develop an understanding of strength and conditioning, speed, agility, endurance, power, and mobility training, while learning how to apply evidence-based conditioning methods to support athletic development. The module equips students with the foundational knowledge and practical skills to design and implement safe and effective conditioning programmes that enhance performance, reduce injury risk, and meet the physical demands of a variety of sports.



What we offer:



Practical learning



Job opportunity alerts on the HFPA Graduates group



Highly qualified and skilled lecturers



Payment terms

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Requirements

HFPA students require reliable access to a personal laptop or desktop computer and the internet to participate fully in their studies. The device is used to access the learning platform, communicate by email, attend online learning activities where applicable, complete assignments using applications such as Microsoft Word and Excel, and download or upload learning materials. The prescribed and recommended reading material is also found online. **Please refer to the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) document in the About Us section of our website for more information.**



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