

NEED ANALYSIS REPORT of the National Sports Academy

Report on the analysis of training needs and user requirements



Executive Summary

This need analysis provides an overview of the training needs and the users' requirements in the fitness and health industry.

Purposes

The purpose of this analysis is to identify and analyse European and the national systems for professional qualifications in the fitness industry, the employers' requirements and the trainees' needs.

Introduction

The fitness industry should be part of the answer to getmore people, more active, more often. BUT – we are a confusing industry - health care professionals don't trust us Consumers don't understand.

So we need to improve our professionalism accountability and credibility.

One of the major conclusions of survey performed on the EU health and fitness industry is: *The Fitness Industry will need a better qualified workforce in the future.*

In respond to this statement, our effort is focused on transfer, upgrade and creation of program for sport centers employees.

Description of qualifications of sport instructor, sport centre manager and technical personnel in sports facilities

Definition

Please note that this section should be read in conjunction with the EHFA Functional Map which is attached as a separate document.

The Health and Fitness area collectively concerns activities, behaviors, or policies pertaining to the maintenance or promotion of health, physical fitness, or wellbeing, and consists of two related sub-areas, which may differ in terms of intervention, strategies and goals as well as operative contexts:

□ the area of Health-Related Exercise, concerns the promotion, design, and execution of exercise as a means to maximize health, prevent and/or treat disease under medical supervision, and ameliorate or cope with disability, under the various health and age conditions;

□ The area of Fitness (Personal or Group Training), concerns the promotion, design, and execution of exercise meant to enhance individual fitness levels and wellness, and to prevent disease in the healthy adult population.

Standard Occupations

Whilst these occupational titles are widely used in the industry their usage and descriptions in this document relates specifically to those individuals within the University system.

2.1 Advanced Gym Instructor/ Personal Trainer

The Advanced Gym Instructor/Personal Trainer is a graduate in the area of sport and health science who is able to design, deliver and evaluate exercise programs related to the maintenance of health and physical efficiency for apparently healthy or low-risk

individuals, using appropriate exercise techniques, ensuring health and safety conditions, and with medical advice as needed.

2.2 Health-related Exercise Instructor/Specialist

The Health-related Exercise Instructor/Specialist is a graduate or post-graduate in the area of sport and health science who is particularly qualified to design, deliver and evaluate, in appropriate contexts and under medical supervision, training programs specifically tailored for the different age groups and health conditions, related to the maintenance and improvement of health and physical efficiency, to risk-factors prevention, movement re-education and rehabilitation, and to coping with chronic conditions or permanent disability.

2.3 Public Health Promoter

The Public Health Promoter is a graduate in the area of sport and health who is particularly able to develop, manage and promote all aspects of public health including exercise programs and physical activity promotion determined by policy frameworks defined at a local, regional, national or international level.

2.4 Health and Fitness Manager

The Health and Fitness Manager is a graduate in the area of sport and health science or management who is able to manage all aspects of a health and fitness facility. The health and fitness manager assumes responsibility for financial management, marketing, promotion and sales, staff management, communications, quality control, programming the use of a facility, and strategic development. The manager will also oversee client retention, technical services, maintenance, hygiene and security.

Activities

This section describes the key activities associated with the occupations listed above and shows those activities which apply to all areas and those which are unique to the particular occupation.

Generic Activities (GA)

GA1. The collection, analysis and interpretation of information about participants' health and Fitness status, exercise and physical activity preference and goals.

GA2. The design, prescription, supervision and monitoring of safe and effective exercise and physical activity programs for apparently healthy or low-risk individuals.

GA3. The provision and maintenance of participants' motivation using a variety of strategies to promote behavior change and exercise or physical activity adherence.

GA4. Referrals to other health professionals as appropriate and control resources to ensure the health and safety of participants and application of emergency procedures where necessary.

GA5. The assumption of responsibility, with an ethical attitude and frame of reference, and evaluation of own performance at all levels of practice.

B. Specific Activities (SA)

B1 Advanced Gym Instructor/ Personal Trainer Activities: (AGI)

AGIA 1: Plan, teach and bring to an end specific activity sessions to individuals and groups in a variety of exercise settings

AGIA 2: Plan and deliver personal training services

AGIA 3: Apply the principles of nutrition and weight management to a progressive physical activity program

Health-Related Exercise Instructor/Specialist Activities: (HREI):

HREIA 1. Do risk stratification of subjects before exercise prescription and exercise testing. Design, administer and evaluate graded exercise tests.

HREIA 2. Design and implement public health educational programs of physical activity for the prevention of major risk factors and chronic disorders (e.g., obesity, diabetes, hypertension, etc.).

HREIA 3. Design, administer and monitor, under medical supervision, training programs for re-education, rehabilitation or coping in special groups and conditions, such as posttraumatic, cardiac or pulmonary patients, or other chronic conditions or disability.

Public Health Promote: Activities: (PHP)

PHPA 1. Participate in public health surveillance programs, searching and using scientific epidemiological evidence.

PHPA 2. Plan, develop, promote, manage and evaluate public health, physical activity and exercise programs.

Health and Fitness Manager Activities: (HFM)

HFMA 1. Manage the financial, human resources and communication functions of a health and fitness facility

HFMA 2. Manage the sales and the services within a health and fitness facility

Competences

A. Generic Competences (GC)

A graduate in the *health and fitness* area should typically be able to:

GC 1. Demonstrate an ability to use a range of communication methodologies to establish an effective rapport with their clients, collect information about their personal goals, lifestyle, medical and exercise history, exercise preferences and fitness level using interviews, a range of physical fitness assessments and other techniques suitable to the clients. Record and analyze information, identify, through research, realistic and effective goals and physical activities to achieve them and identify with the clients any barriers to achieving the goals.

GC 2. Demonstrate an ability to practically deploy established techniques of analysis and enquiry in health, fitness and physical activity promotion, including practical fitness instruction/applied exercise teaching, and exercise prescription. Ability to design, conduct, evaluate and modify exercise programs appropriate to counter sedentariness in the general population.

GC 3. Demonstrate an ability to use a range of motivation and behavior change strategies to enable individuals to be enthusiastic and motivated about their goals and progress and provide the support they need to overcome obstacles and make long-term changes to their behavior.

GC 4. Establish effective working relationships, define and agree roles and responsibilities, and agree common objectives and methods of communication with other professionals. Exchange accurate information with other professionals and respect professional boundaries. Respond to health and safety issues including planning how to minimize risk to individuals and ensure a working knowledge of emergency procedures and how to implement them.

GC 5. Recognize and respond to ethical issues which directly pertain to the promotion of health, fitness and physical activity, and to exercise interventions, including relevant legislation and professional codes of conduct. Review session and program evaluations,

identify personal strengths and weaknesses, research developments in the health and fitness sector and identify opportunities for further learning and personal development.

B. Specific Competences (SC)

Advanced Gym Instructor/ Personal Trainer Competences (AGIC)
AGIC 1. Demonstrate an ability to instruct and prescribe a program of activities for, cardiovascular fitness, strength, endurance, flexibility, core stability and weight management for experienced and inexperienced clients, individuals and groups and for goals including physical, psychological, social, lifestyle and adherence.

AGIC 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the theory and practice of personal training, understanding the range of settings for personal training including the gym, the home and the outdoors. Utilize advanced fitness techniques such as assisted activities, functional activities, assisted modifications and proprioception training. Apply an understanding the commercial realities and business models employed by both self-employed and employed personal trainers

AGIC 3. Apply medically established nutrition and weight management guidelines to work with clients. Understand the inter-relationship between nutrition, health and exercise; sources functions and requirements for nutrients; basic dietary assessment methodologies; referral procedures and principles of weight management.

Health-Related Exercise Instructor/Specialist Competences:

HREC 1. Apply the acquired scientific background to the understanding of risk stratification and graded exercise testing, with an ethical attitude and frame of reference.

HREC 2. Understanding the biological and psychosocial implications of physical activity at the various ages and in the different health, psychological, and social conditions.

HREC 3. Capability to design, conducts, and evaluates exercise programs for children and for the elderly.

HREC 4. Sensibility for the problems of puberty and maturation, of individual psychosocial wellbeing, and of older age immobility inactivity and disability, and specific skills to deal with them.

Public Health Promoter Competences:

PHPC 1. Select the appropriate physical activities and design public health and exercise programs for specific participants.

PHPC 2. Promote the public health and exercise program and develop and apply strategies to encourage participants to adhere.

PHPC 3. Co-ordinate, review and evaluate the implementation of public health and exercise programs.

Health and Fitness Manager Competences:

HFMC 1. Apply business planning and financial management techniques to the health and fitness facility. Recruit, retain, lead and develop staff. Manage information and communications strategies for the business

HFMC 2 Manage facilities and equipment, undertake service planning and quality management activities, taking responsibility for customer care, events and project management and organization of technical activities in line with the businesses objectives and health, safety and ethical considerations.

C. Master level:

Health-Related Exercise Specialist:

1. Basic knowledge on traumas and other temporary or permanent disabilities or chronic disorders.
2. Understanding the implications of specific exercise programs, and capability to apply and implement the principles of movement therapy.
3. Understanding the interactions between the therapy prescribed by physicians and the exercise program, and capability to adjust the program accordingly.
4. Detailed knowledge of disease-specific findings, signs and symptoms increasing the risk of complications during exercise.

Overview of the qualification systems

EQF –Sport

In the **EUROPEAN OCCUPATIONS FRAMEWORK WITH MAJOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS (NEORS)** the *fitness instructor* is described as “Fitness instructors plan, develop, implement and evaluate physical exercise programs and sessions meant to enhance individual fitness levels and wellness and to prevent disease in the healthy adult population”. This framework is developed by EOSE and the levels are not specified yet. According the two major European organizations EHFA and AEHESIS the fitness instructors might have qualifications from 3 to 7. The spectrum is very broad and currently there is not unified system adopted on EU level.

Another very popular system for qualification used in Europe is the ACSM. It is broadly spread in UK.

This system is providing training courses for Health/Fitness Instructor at two levels:

Gym instructor – level 3

Personal trainer - level 4

According the Bulgarian system for professional education there are two professions listed in the area of fitness:

Fitness instructor – level 4

Assistant instructor in Fitness – level 3

Methods

Literature review, paper and web-based questionnaires, consultations for obtaining expert opinions, discussions with university authorities have been used.

Instrumentation

A comprehensive literature review has been performed with particular emphasis on existing systems for education and training and common European statements related to the fitness industry.

The final aim of the education and training programs is increasing the employability. This is the degree of adaptability an individual demonstrates in finding and keeping a job, and updating occupational competences. So the aim of our programs is high level of employability.

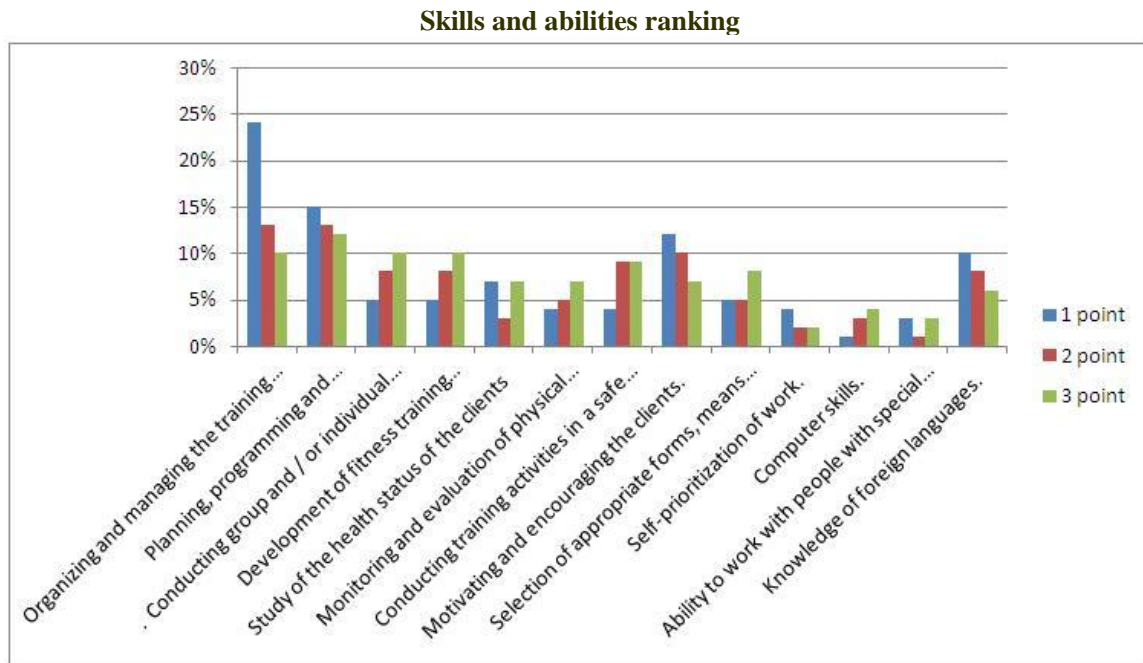
In order to catch the work market tendencies in the situation of economic crisis consultations were made with experts in the field from the American university in Bulgaria. The main conclusion of this survey is that as a main challenge to the educational institution is pointed the practical application of the training programs. In compliance with their findings related to the expectations of the employers we designed a questionnaire in order to explore if students accents in education coincide with those of the employers.

According to some other marketing surveys of the same university the expectations of the clients are important and form the opinion of the employer when hiring staff. For this reason we designed a questionnaire in order to see what kind of skills and personal qualities they expect from their instructors.

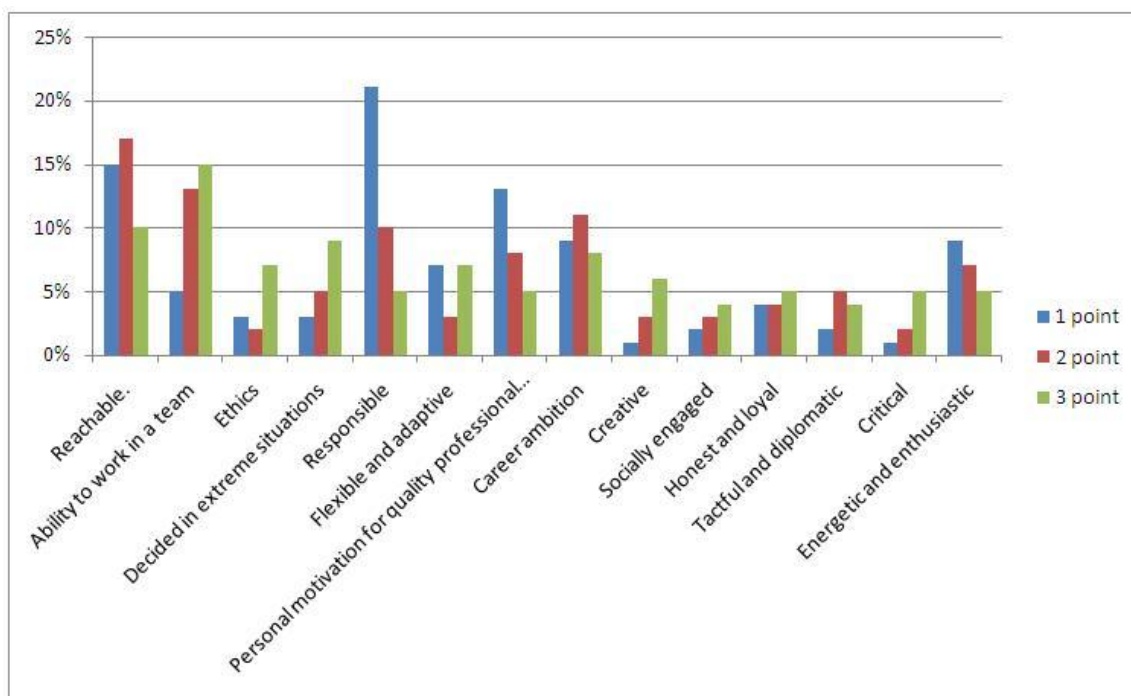
For the assessment of the current level of preparation of the fitness instructors according their employers we used a standardised evaluation checklist (Health fitness Instructors handbook, 2004)

Results

The results of the NSA students' survey (n = 200; 16 replies were not considered) related to the ranking of the skills and abilities and personal qualities are presented in the following tables:

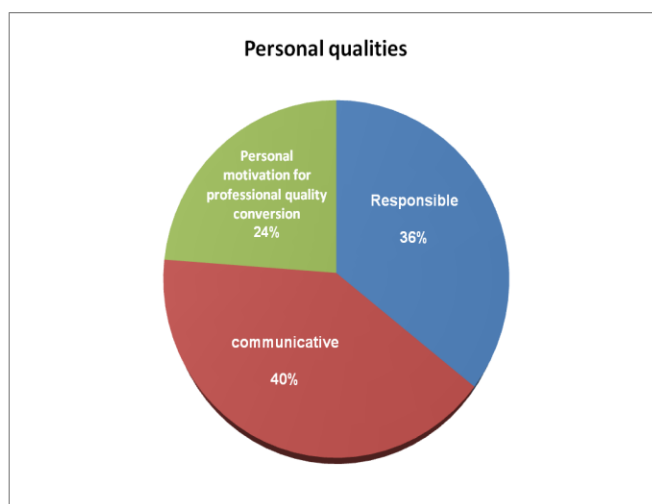
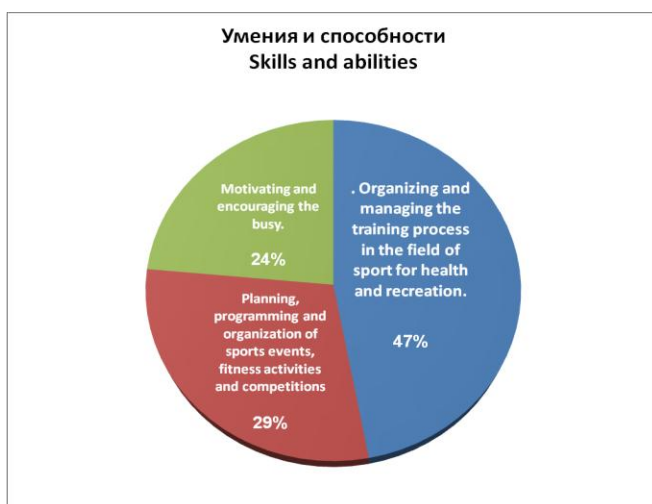


Personal qualities ranking



The abilities and skills related to all aspects of the training process are ranked as the two most important. On third place is the ability to motivate the clients. This result is correlating with the ‘communication’ from the personal qualities, which is ranked as second. The other leading personal qualities are responsibility, motivation for professional growth, and team work abilities. The entire ranking of all results could be seen in Annex 1.

The diagrams below represent the relative distribution of the first to third place ranking.



It is also very interesting to take a look at the rate of rejection. Some questionable tendencies could be observed. The results are presented in Annex 2.

The results of the clients questionnaires (n=500) are also very interesting. Only 28% of the clients think that their instructors have very good or excellent training. And the same percentage believes that their instructor did not follow a certified course. The ranking of the skills and abilities correlates with the choice of the students.

From the results of the evaluation checklist only one conclusion could be drawn – the employers' think that the communication skills and the ability of the practical application of the theoretical knowledge should be improved.

Conclusions

The results represented show the need of a new approach in the design of training programs with greater stress on the training process. The rate of rejection of the skill related to the health status shows the need of the creation of a new course of kinesiotherapy to be added to the main program of the instructors.

This document is just the beginning of a process towards creating a program that meets the goals of the union of the Bologna and Copenhagen Process. The work has enabled the project group to formulate a model for consideration and discussion across the project partners for creating a credible VET program.

After the comprehensive literature, projects and EU activities review, the most appropriate summary for this report is the statement of Prof. W van Mechelen- Chair of EHFA Scientific Advisory Board:

*“The Fitness Industry will need a better qualified workforce in the future. Now, we deal with a relatively healthy population, but the next generation will not be so healthy, so your industry will need real **Health & Fitness professionals**”*