

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Note: The terms in **bold** are defined in the Glossary section.

SECTION I. INSTITUTION

I.A. The institution has appropriate approvals and accreditation to offer programs in higher education.

I.B. The program must demonstrate that the institution has the resources to support the program.

I.C. The program mission, goals, and expected outcomes align with that of the institution.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Documentation of institutional accreditation and approvals as appropriate. A needs analysis, internal report, or explanation that the institution has the resources to support the program. The stated missions of the institution, the academic unit in which the program is housed, and the program and how they are interrelated.

SECTION II. FACULTY

II.A. **Program Director:** The program director is the person responsible for administering the academic program, ensuring program compliance with all applicable state rules and regulations, institutional and program policies, and the Standards for accreditation.

The Program Director must:

1. be a full-time employee of the sponsoring institution.
2. have full faculty status, rights, responsibilities, privileges, and voting rights as defined by institution policy, consistent with similar positions at the institution necessary to provide appropriate program representation in institutional decisions.
3. have a master's degree or higher in a related field.
4. be in good standing with the NSCA with a current CSCS certification;
5. have experience with curriculum and/or program development in a related field
6. be qualified commensurate with other administrative positions within similar allied health programs in the institution. If no such similar program exists at the institution, then must be benchmarked against other peer institutions. Academic rank and tenure status are determined by the institution according to institutional policy.
7. have programmatic administrative and supervisory responsibility consistent with other similar assignments within the institution.
8. oversee and evaluate program-specific course content and curricular efficacy.
9. have administrative release/reassigned workload. The Program Director's release time must be equivalent to similar allied health programs in the institution. If no such similar program exists at the institution, then must be benchmarked against other peer institutions.
10. The Program Director's responsibilities must include input to and assurance of the following program features:
 - (a) ongoing compliance with the Standards
 - (b) planning, development, implementation, delivery, documentation, and assessment of all components of the curriculum;
 - (c) effective leadership in areas such as field experience, strategic planning, resources, and budget.
 - (d) compliance with all applicable state rules and regulations
 - (e) compliance with institutional and program policies

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Documentation showing that the program director is a full-time faculty of the institution; curriculum vitae showing professional attainment/scholarship and appropriate past experience to be in program director role; documentation outlining how the program director is qualified commensurate with other administrative positions within similar allied health programs at the institution. Workload documentation indicating reassigned time for administrative duties. Documentation of current CSCS certification.

- II.B. **Field Experience Coordinator:** Is the person responsible for student field experience placement, field experience site evaluation and training, and regular communication with the field experience site supervisors.

The Field Experience Coordinator must:

1. Be a full-time employee of the sponsoring institutions
2. Have release/reassigned workload to meet the institutional responsibilities for overseeing the field experience experience.
3. Have experience with field experience oversight and development.
4. The Field Experience Coordinator is responsible for:
 - (a) student field experience placement,
 - (b) maintaining current affiliation agreement(s) or MOU(s) with field experience sites
 - (c) field experience site evaluation
 - (d) field experience Site Supervisor training
 - (e) field experience Site Supervisor evaluation
 - (f) regular communication with the field experience site supervisors
 - (g) following institutional and program policies

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Documentation showing that the field experience coordinator is a full-time employee of the institution. Curriculum Vitae showing professional attainment; evidence of qualification (curriculum vitae and/or resume documenting evidence of appropriate professional and/or academic achievement) to be in Field Experience Coordinator role. Workload table indicating reassigned time for the field experience administration according to institutional policy.

- II.C. **Strength and Conditioning Faculty:** The teaching faculty of the strength and conditioning educational program shall be identified as those faculty members responsible for teaching in the required subject matter areas specified in Section III and other didactic course work included in the strength and conditioning curriculum as identified by the institution.
1. Members of the teaching faculty must have formal academic appointments.
 2. All faculty assigned and responsible for the instruction of strength and conditioning knowledge, skills, and abilities in required coursework must:
 - (a) Be qualified through professional preparation and experienced in their respective academic areas as determined by the institution.
 - (b) Those faculty who teach courses with content specific to strength and conditioning as defined in Standards III.C.6-10. Must be in good standing with the NSCA with a current CSCS certification.
 - (c) Incorporate the most current evidence-based strength and conditioning knowledge, skills, and abilities as they pertain to their respective teaching areas.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Curriculum vitae for each faculty member documenting evidence of appropriate professional and/or academic achievement to be in faculty role. Appropriate certifications; professional attainment/scholarship; evidence of qualification. Narrative explaining how the program is assured that the most current evidence-based knowledge, skills, and abilities are taught by the faculty.

- II.D. **Strength and Conditioning Faculty Number:** In addition to the Program Director, the number of strength and conditioning faculty must meet the needs of the program (based on the program's student enrollment) and be sufficient to:
1. advise and mentor students
 2. meet program outcomes
 3. allow the institution to offer strength and conditioning courses on a regular, planned basis
 4. maintain student-to-faculty ratios that allow for effective instruction and evaluation as consistent with other allied health programs. If the institution does not sponsor other allied health programs, this standard must be benchmarked against other peer institutions (e.g. ERP or accredited strength and conditioning programs).

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Faculty workload data; teaching responsibilities; other university-required responsibilities.

- II E. **Field Experience Site Supervisor:** The field experience supervisor is the person at the field experience site responsible for the supervision of the field experience experience at the site. The Field experience Supervisor:
1. should be CSCS certified.
 2. ensure that student interns are directly supervised during day-to-day activities.
 3. provide instruction opportunity, assessment, and feedback for the application of current knowledge, skills, and abilities designated by the NSCA's Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines (Standard III.C. of this document).
 4. demonstrate understanding of and compliance with the program's policies and procedures.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Appropriate certifications; professional attainment/scholarship; evidence of qualification to be in site supervisor role. Explanation of how the Field experience Site Supervisors are trained and informed of the programs policies and procedures.

SECTION III. CURRICULUM

III.A. The curriculum is developed, implemented, and revised to reflect clear statements of expected student outcomes that are congruent with:

1. the program's mission and goals.
2. the NSCA's Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines.
3. the roles for which the program is preparing its graduates.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Statement or copies of the program mission and goals

III.B. The program must be a minimum of a concentration or equivalent with a strength and conditioning title.

1. The Curriculum must be of appropriate length and credit hours (as determined by the institutional policies and institutional accreditors) to fulfill requirements for the chosen degree designation.
2. Sequencing of the curriculum must provide proper progression of student learning of required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Policies must be in place to allow for student remediation.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Official institutional documents showing the program is a minimum of a concentration or equivalent with a strength and conditioning title AND an example student plan or sequence of courses.

III. C Curriculum must include the following areas of instruction:

1. Human Anatomy and Physiology
 - (a) Structure and Function of Body Systems
 - (b) Musculoskeletal System
 - (c) Neuromuscular System
 - (d) Cardiovascular System
 - (e) Respiratory System
2. Exercise Physiology
 - (a) Bioenergetics of Exercise and Training
 - (b) Biological Energy Systems
 - (c) Substrate Depletion and Repletion
 - (d) Bioenergetic Limiting Factors in Exercise Performance
 - (e) Oxygen Uptake and the Aerobic and Anaerobic Contributions to Exercise
 - (f) Metabolic Specificity of Training
 - (g) Endocrine Responses to Resistance Exercise
 - (h) Synthesis, Storage, and Secretion of Hormones
 - (i) Muscle as the Target for Hormone Interactions
 - (j) Role of Receptors in Mediating Hormonal Changes
 - (k) Categories of Hormones
 - (l) Heavy Resistance Exercise and Hormonal Increases
 - (m) Mechanisms of Hormonal Interactions
 - (n) Hormonal Changes in Peripheral Blood
 - (o) Adaptations in the Endocrine System
 - (p) Primary Anabolic Hormones

- (q) Adrenal Hormones
 - (r) Other Hormonal Considerations
3. Kinesiology/Biomechanics
- (a) Biomechanics of Resistance Exercise
 - (b) Skeletal Musculature
 - (c) Anatomical Planes and Major Body Movements
 - (d) Human Strength and Power
 - (e) Sources of Resistance to Muscle Contraction
 - (f) Joint Biomechanics: Concerns in Resistance Training
4. Sports Nutrition
- (a) Basic Nutrition Factors in Health
 - (b) Role of Sport Nutrition Professionals
 - (c) Standard Nutrition Guidelines
 - (d) Macronutrients
 - (e) Vitamins
 - (f) Minerals
 - (g) Fluid and Electrolytes
 - (h) Nutrition Strategies for Maximizing Performance
 - (i) Pre-Competition, During-Event, and Post-Competition Nutrition
 - (j) Nutrition Strategies for Altering Body Composition
 - (k) Feeding and Eating Disorders
 - (l) Performance-Enhancing Substances and Methods
 - (m) Types of Performance-Enhancing Substances
 - (n) Hormones
 - (o) Dietary Supplements
5. Psychology of Sport and Exercise
- (a) Psychology of Athletic Preparation and Performance
 - (b) Role of Sport Psychology
 - (c) Ideal Performance State
 - (d) Energy Management: Arousal, Anxiety, and Stress
 - (e) Influence of Arousal and Anxiety on Performance
 - (f) Motivation
 - (g) Attention and Focus
 - (h) Psychological Techniques for Improved Performance
 - (i) Enhancing Motor Skill Acquisition and Learning
6. Scientific Principles of Strength and Conditioning
- (a) Adaptations to Anaerobic Training Programs
 - (b) Neural Adaptations
 - (c) Muscular Adaptations
 - (d) Connective Tissue Adaptations
 - (e) Endocrine Responses and Adaptations to Anaerobic Training
 - (f) Cardiovascular and Respiratory Responses to Anaerobic Exercise
 - (g) Compatibility of Aerobic and Anaerobic Modes of Training
 - (h) Overtraining
 - (i) Detraining
 - (j) Adaptations to Aerobic Endurance Training Programs
 - (k) Acute Responses to Aerobic Exercise

- (l) Chronic Adaptations to Aerobic Exercise
 - (m) Adaptations to Aerobic Endurance Training
 - (n) External and Individual Factors Influencing Adaptations to Aerobic Endurance Training
 - (o) Overtraining: Definition, Prevalence, Diagnosis, and Potential Markers
 - (p) Age- and Sex-Related Differences and Their Implications for Resistance Exercise
 - (q) Children
 - (r) Female Athletes
 - (s) Older Adults
 - (t) Rehabilitation and Reconditioning
 - (u) Types of Injury
 - (v) Tissue Healing
 - (w) Rehabilitation and Reconditioning Strategies
 - (x) Program Design
 - (y) Reducing Risk of Injury and Reinjury
7. Resistance Training and Conditioning (Practical/Laboratory)
- (a) Warm-Up and Flexibility Training
 - (b) Warm-Up
 - (c) Flexibility
 - (d) Types of Stretching
 - (e) Static Stretching Techniques
 - (f) Dynamic Stretching Techniques
 - (g) Exercise Technique for Free-Weight and Machine Training
 - (h) Fundamentals of Exercise Technique
 - (i) Spotting Free-Weight Exercises
 - (j) Resistance Training Exercises
 - (k) Olympic-style Lifting Techniques / Progressions and Regressions
 - (l) Exercise Technique for Alternative Modes and Nontraditional Implement Training
 - (m) Body-Weight Training Methods
 - (n) Core Stability and Balance Training Methods
 - (o) Variable-Resistance Training Methods
 - (p) Nontraditional Implement Training Methods
 - (q) Unilateral Training
 - (r) Alternative Modes and Nontraditional Exercises
8. Exercise Technique/Exercise Prescription w/ Emphasis in Anaerobic Exercise
- (a) Principles of Test Selection and Administration
 - (b) Reasons for Testing
 - (c) Testing Terminology
 - (d) Evaluation of Test Quality
 - (e) Test Selection
 - (f) Test Administration
 - (g) Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation of Selected Tests
 - (h) Measuring Parameters of Athletic Performance
 - (i) Selected Test Protocols and Scoring Data
 - (j) Statistical Evaluation of Test Data
9. Program Design as Related to Strength and Conditioning
- (a) Program Design for Resistance Training
 - (b) Principles of Anaerobic Exercise Prescription

- (i) Step 1: Needs Analysis
 - (ii) Step 2: Exercise Selection
 - (iii) Step 3: Training Frequency
 - (iv) Step 4: Exercise Order
 - (v) Step 5: Training Load and Repetitions
 - (vi) Step 6: Volume
 - (vii) Step 7: Rest Periods
- (c) Program Design and Technique for Plyometric Training
- (i) Plyometric Mechanics and Physiology
 - (ii) Design of Plyometric Training Programs
 - (iii) Age Considerations
 - (iv) Plyometrics and Other Forms of Exercise
 - (v) Safety Considerations
 - (vi) Plyometric Drills
- (d) Program Design and Technique for Speed and Agility Training
- (i) Speed and Agility Mechanics
 - (ii) Neurophysiological Basis for Speed
 - (iii) Running Speed
 - (iv) Agility Performance and Change-of-Direction Ability
 - (v) Methods of Developing Speed
 - (vi) Methods of Developing Agility
 - (vii) Program Design
 - (viii) Speed Development Strategies
 - (ix) Agility Development Strategies
 - (x) Speed and Agility Drills
- (e) Program Design and Technique for Aerobic Endurance Training
- (i) Factors Related to Aerobic Endurance Performance
 - (ii) Designing an Aerobic Endurance Program
 - (iii) Types of Aerobic Endurance Training Programs
 - (iv) Application of Program Design to Training Seasons
 - (v) Special Issues Related to Aerobic Endurance Training
 - (vi) Aerobic Endurance Training Exercises
 - (vii) Periodization
 - (viii) Central Concepts Related to Periodization
 - (ix) Periodization Hierarchy
 - (x) Periodization Periods
 - (xi) Applying Sport Seasons to the Periodization Periods
 - (xii) Undulating Versus Linear Periodization Models
 - (xiii) Example of an Annual Training Plan
10. Program Organization, Administration, and Oversight
- (a) Facility Design, Layout, and Organization
 - (b) General Aspects of New Facility Design
 - (c) Existing Strength and Conditioning Facilities
 - (d) Assessing Athletic Program Needs
 - (e) Designing the Strength and Conditioning Facility
 - (f) Arranging Equipment in the Strength and Conditioning Facility
 - (g) Maintaining and Cleaning Surfaces and Equipment

- (h) Facility Policies, Procedures, and Legal Issues
- (i) Mission Statement and Program Goals
- (j) Legal and Ethical Issues
- (k) Staff Policies and Activities
- (l) Facility Administration
- (m) Emergency Planning and Response

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Curriculum map demonstrating inclusion of content in the program; Syllabi and other course documents demonstrating mastery of core competencies listed in Standard III.C. Provide a description of how the expected outcomes were met; examples of learning experiences/objectives and documentation including course syllabi, sample exams, final exams, and practical/lab experiences.

III.D. Strength and Conditioning **Field Experience**

1. The field experience experiences must provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate application of the core competencies outlined in the didactic content areas listed in Standard III.C.
2. The field experiences must follow a logical sequence in the curriculum, allowing the student to apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities, learned through didactic and laboratory classes. Field experience should be done towards the end of the curriculum within the final year of study.
3. The field experiences must provide opportunity for students to demonstrate professional and ethical standards within the field of strength and conditioning.
4. The field experience experiences must provide a minimum of 300 hours of contact time including:
 - a. Two substantially different experiences that includes two or more of the following categories: sport, gender, age range, other,
 - b. Two different supervisors (Does not require experiences at two different sites)
 - c. Minimum of 75 hours per experience.
 - d. One experience must be at least 6 weeks in length.
 - e. Specifically, the field experience experiences must minimally include the following key areas: (a) Warm-up; flexibility training; exercise technique; spotting; Olympic-style lifting/progressions/regressions; test selection and administration; program design; speed/agility/plyometric training; anaerobic and aerobic program design; periodization.
5. There must be a **memorandum of understanding (MOU)** or other document signed by both the field experience site and the institution recognizing the student's presence at the site and giving permission for the student to participate in the field experience experience actively.
6. Field experience must be included in the curriculum as a course or part of a course.
7. Paid field experiences are permitted provided they meet all the requirements as described in this section.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Narrative or curriculum "map" describing how the competencies (listed in Standard III.C) are integrated across the field experiences that require students to demonstrate and apply these principles. A log of field experience hours/experiences/client encounters must be provided for each student. A description of how the expected outcomes were met; examples of learning experiences/objectives and documentation including evaluations from Field experience Site Supervisor. An MOU must be provided for each field experience site.

SECTION IV. OUTCOMES

IV.A. There is an ongoing, formal program assessment process that determines the extent to which the program meets its stated outcomes.

The assessment process minimally includes data related to;

1. student **outcomes**
2. program outcomes
3. CASCE Standards
4. Instruction
5. field experiences
6. admissions criteria and prerequisites
7. curriculum scope and sequence
8. graduate placement rates
9. retention and graduation rate
10. CSCS exam success for graduates of the program

IV.B. Identifies program strengths and weaknesses.

IV.C. Includes considered decisions regarding need for change.

IV.D. Includes steps to achieve the changes, with anticipated dates of completion.

IV.E. The extent to which graduates of the program meet the expected student outcomes of the program.

IV.F. **First time pass rates** for the CSCS exam, based on a 3-year aggregate, must minimally be 75%.

IV.G. Programs must publicly display (website) student enrollment, graduation, retention rate, CSCS pass rate, and graduate placement rate.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

A copy of the assessment plan for both program and student outcomes; reports showing data collected through the assessment plan; demonstrate strengths and weaknesses and how those were or will be addressed in the curriculum; describe any changes that will occur over the next 3 to 5 years as a result of assessment; 3-year aggregate first time pass rates; 12-month employment rates. Screenshot and URL of webpage containing information as required in Standard IV.G.

SECTION V. RESOURCES

- V.A. Student Services -The program must demonstrate that advising, academic support, disability, and financial aid services are available to students consistent with other programs at the institution.
- V.B. Support Staff -The program has, or has access to administrative, secretarial, and technical support to meet its program outcomes.
- V.C. Financial Support - The program must receive adequate, equitable, and annually available resources necessary to meet the program's size, mission, and program outcomes, and sustainability of the program.
- V.D. Academic Resources -The institutional library system and/or associated learning resources are adequate to support faculty and student scholarship and the educational needs of the program.
- V.E. Facilities -The program has, or has access to,
1. classroom/laboratory/training space of sufficient quality and quantity to carry out program goals. The physical environment is supportive of effective teaching and learning processes.
 2. The program has offices and other space of sufficient quantity and quality for faculty to carry out their teaching, advisement, and service activities efficiently and effectively.
- V.F. Equipment, Technology and Materials- The program has, or has access to, equipment, technology, and materials necessary to meet program and student outcomes and Standards.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Documentation of student services listed in V.A.; Income and expense data; adequacy of the budget and services to meet the needs of the program, to include supplies, equipment purchase, repair, and replacement; describe the process used to determine short- and long-term budgetary needs that are tied to the goals and expected outcomes of the program.; Example list or link to library/learning resources; narrative describing facility components identified in V.E. and how they are adequate to meet program needs; narrative describing components identified in V.F. and how they are adequate to meet program needs

SECTION VI. POLICIES

- VI.A. Prospective and enrolled students are provided with relevant information about the institution and program that may affect them, including, but not limited to:
1. catalogs
 2. academic calendars
 3. grading policies
 4. financial aid
 5. the program's accreditation status
 6. the process to register a complaint with the accrediting agency
 7. student grievances
 8. program/student outcome information
 9. tuition cost; program fees
 10. withdrawal/refund
 11. remediation, retention, and other pertinent information
- VI.B. Materials related to the institution and program are accurate, comprehensive, current, and provided to students in a timely manner.
- VI.C. Program policies, procedures, and practices related to student recruitment, admission, and field experience placement are based on appropriate and equitable criteria and applicable law and ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.
- VI.D. Policies, procedures, and practices that affect the rights, responsibilities, safety, privacy, and dignity of students are written, disseminated, and applied equitably.
- VI.E. Policies, procedures, and practices are in place to handle student complaints and grievances and are followed.
- VI.F. Policies, procedures, or practices provide for compliance with accreditation standards, including:
1. Timely submission of required fees
 2. Timely submission of required documentation
 3. Timely notification of expected or unexpected substantive change(s) within the program and of any change in institutional accreditation status or legal authority to provide post-secondary education.
- VI.G. Accreditation status (and changes in status) will be publicly available. Current students will be immediately notified of a change in accreditation status.

Documentation of Compliance (provide the following):

Explanation of how students gain entry into the program, including specific admission standards; explain how students are provided with, or can access, information relating to program policies, procedures, and practices; explanation of how complaints are handled/processed; describe how records of complaints are, or would be, maintained; appropriate pages of student handbook and/or university catalog/website demonstrating components of VI. A. and narrative of how students are provided with the information if other than via the institution's public website.

Glossary Section

Adjunct Faculty--a type of academic appointment in higher education where an individual is contracted to teach a course (s) but whose main employment is outside of the academic unit of the institution.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) --a formal agreement between the institution and a Field Experience or Internship site. The agreement defines the roles of the institution, the site and the student and specifically allows the student to be at the facility.

Field Experience--The practical experiences that are part of the curriculum. Field experience is a general term and the institution wish to use a name that is consistent within the institution. May be called Practical Experience, Internship, or other appropriate title, but must contain the practical, hands-on components with actual clients.

First time pass rate on CSCS examination- the percentage of students from the program who challenge the CSCS examination and pass on the first attempt. The first time pass rate will be calculated using a 3-year aggregate of the number of students who passed the examination on the first attempt, divided by the number of students from the program who attempted the exam during that three year period.

Outcomes- student and program outcomes are quantitative or qualitative indications of achievement.

Scholarship- contributions to the academy that are broadly defined by the Boyer model. Scholarship of discover, integration, application/practice and teaching.

References

1. Boyer, EL. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 1991.