



Position Statement:

Scope of Practice for AUSactive Registered Exercise Professionals

Revised July 2021

AUSactive, the National Health and Fitness Industry Association, governs and administers the AUSactive Register of Professionals. The aim of the system is to ensure that AUSactive registered 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 AUSactive 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 an AUSactive registered exercise professional and provide clarity in regard to role and responsibility. As health and 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 AUSactive registered exercise professionals does not impede innovative practice, stifle opportunities for adaptation to a changing environment or limit consumer access to participate in services.

1. The role of an AUSactive Registered Exercise Professional

A member of the public may utilise health and fitness services as a leisure or recreation activity, to complement sporting pursuits, as a means of community participation, or to help prevent or to improve health problems. As such, an AUSactive registered 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 AUSactive Registered Exercise Professional is to plan and deliver safe and effective exercise programs for individuals and/or groups. An AUSactive Registered Exercise Professional undertakes one or more of the following roles:

- /// Personal Trainer
- /// Gym Instructor
- /// Group Exercise Instructor
- /// Aqua Exercise Instructor
- /// Group Exercise Leader

Competency in delivering specific activities within these roles is obtained through qualification and/or approved continuing education. Exercise Professional registration practice is based on verification of initial and continuing competence.

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/fitness levels
- May manage 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/fitness levels (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
- 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.

Aqua Exercise Instructor

- Delivers exercise sessions designed for participation by a group of clients with a mix of ages/fitness levels (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
- 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 water-based sessions in settings with pools, such as fitness facilities, leisure and community centres.

Group Exercise Leader

- The scope of this role is limited to leading pre-designed group exercise sessions
- Typically instructs sessions in predictable settings such as group exercise studios within fitness facilities.

2. Qualifications and Continuing Education

AUSactive Registered Exercise Professionals are required to complete the minimum level vocational qualification or equivalent higher education requirements and/or qualification for category specific registration and to hold current vocational nationally endorsed first aid and CPR certifications. Exercise delivery competency is enhanced through completion of AUSactive 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.

3. Clientele

AUSactive Registered Exercise Professionals are qualified to plan and deliver exercise for low and moderate risk clientele based on the industry endorsed Pre-exercise Screening systems^{1,2}.

AUSactive Registered Exercise Professionals may work with higher risk clientele (whose conditions are stabilised and managed) after making a written referral to and receiving documented guidance on the exercise program from the clients' treating medical and/or allied health practitioner.

AUSactive Registered Exercise Professionals should refer to the nationally endorsed Pre-exercise Screening Systems to determine appropriate exercise prescription for physical activities based on the client's risk factors.

4. Settings

The services of an AUSactive Registered Exercise Professional are typically conducted in a variety of indoor and outdoor settings including health and fitness centres or studios, community centres, aquatic facilities, 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 (including outdoors and online) is gained through initial qualification and/or approved continuing education.

AUSactive Registered Exercise Professionals are required to adhere to all relevant industry codes of practice and ethics, legislative or statutory requirements (refer to section 7).

5. Professional Scope and Boundaries

5.1 An **AUSactive** 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. Working within professional limitations to provide basic healthy eating information and advice through the application of nationally endorsed nutritional standards and guidelines
- H. Provision of general nationally endorsed public health information that will educate and support positive client health outcomes

5.2 The scope of practice for an AUSactive 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. Referring to medical or allied health professionals for guidance. Utilising best practice referral/ feedback processes to optimise client health outcomes

5.3 The scope of practice for an AUSactive 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

5.4 The scope of practice for An AUSactive Registered Professional with the Aqua Exercise Instructor category is limited to:

- A. Pre-exercise screening
- B. Safety and risk assessment and management (including the ability to perform safe water rescues)
- C. Application of first aid to clients where required
- D. Plan and instruct group water-based exercise sessions

5.5 The AUSactive Registered Exercise Professional Scope of Practice does not include:

- A. Provision of nutritional advice outside of basic healthy eating information and nationally endorsed nutritional standards and guidelines
- B. Therapeutic treatment or independent rehabilitative exercise prescription
- C. Independent exercise prescription for high risk clients
- D. Diagnostic tests or procedures
- E. Sports coaching
- F. Psychological Counselling

6. Code of Ethical Conduct

AUSactive Registered Professionals agree to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct³.

The Code of Ethical Conduct outlines a mandatory list of professional expectations including:

- Good professionals practice
- Working with clients
- Culturally safe and inclusive practice
- Publication and public statements
- Mentoring, supervising and assessing
- Complaints and investigations; and
- Reporting obligations.

7. Legislation and Regulation

The AUSactive 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 WHS/OH&S legislation
- B. Civil Liability Law
- C. Privacy Law
- D. Consumer Law
- E. Anti-discrimination Law
- F. Criminal Law
- G. Child safety and protection laws
- H. Local government policy for the use of public space for exercise service delivery
- I. Other relevant setting-specific policies or regulations

References:

1. Exercise & Sports Science Australia, Fitness Australia and Sports Medicine Australia (2019) *Adult Pre- Exercise Screening System*, retrieved from <https://ausactive.org.au/apss>
2. Exercise & Sports Science Australia, Fitness Australia and Sports Medicine Australia (2021) *Pre-Exercise Screening System for Young People*, retrieved from <https://ausactive.org.au/pss-yp>
3. AUSactive (2020) *Code of Ethical Conduct for Registered AUSactive Professionals* retrieved from <https://ausactive.org.au/code-of-ethical-conduct>



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