

Exercise Science Practicum - Supervisor Assessment Guide

Part A: How to Grade

The Exercise Science (ES) Supervisor Assessments form part of ES student's Practicum Unit assessment tasks, and assist The University of Tasmania to determine a student's competency to practice safely in real workplace settings. The online Supervisor Assessment form details 12 questions to direct agency supervisors in providing feedback that reinforces professional strengths and facilitates discussions and strategies around areas that need improvement. Click or Copy / Paste the following competency assessment form link to undertake the assessment: <https://www.utas.edu.au/health/professional-experience-placement/supervisors/exercise-science-practicum-competency-assessment>

To facilitate your student's professional development whilst on practicum, this assessment is completed at two time points. Time point **one** is early in the practicum experience somewhere between ~20-40 hours of work, and is known as the **interim assessment**. The interim assessment allows students to receive early feedback of professional attributes and allows the university to instigate "at risk procedures" for students who are failing to meet minimum performance expectations. Time point **two** is for the **final assessment** and is done sometime within the last week of placement time. The University of Tasmania encourages all assessments to be completed interactively in consultation with the student where possible.

Use "**Part B: Competency Criteria Descriptions**" in this document to help determine what skills, behaviours and activities are expected for each competency criterion. Consider a "**Pass**" grade equivalent to the minimum safe standards expected for an entry level (new graduate) exercise scientist. Consider where in the semester the student is, and expect lower/less skilled performance at the beginning of the placement, but higher and more skilled towards the end. For each performance indicator on the assessment form, the student should demonstrate consistent performance of that behaviour or skill for their level of study, experience, and according to the [AES Professional Standards](#). A student who is consistently exceeding safe standards and ticks off most or all the examples in the performance indicator descriptions below, might be given the rating "**Highly Competent**", or "**Outstanding**". A "**Working Towards**" (WT, approximate to a "*fail*") rating may be given where you deem a student is not yet meeting the minimum safe standards of a particular skill or behaviour. Please be objective in your ratings and consider the Exercise Science Scope of Practice, your client safety, comfort and the ES professional reputation as paramount when making your ratings.

For each competency criterion, extra space is provided on the online assessment form for specific comments, particularly in relation to how a student can improve their performance, or provide examples of circumstances where the student performances have been particularly strong. If any of the attributes are not able to be assessed, then please advise either (Not Applicable) **N/A (A)** or **N/A (B)** as described in the rating scale table (page 3).

Comparing students to other practicum students of your experience and level of study may also be helpful when rating student performance. However, these assessments are not designed to compare students to *experienced* Exercise Scientists in the workforce. Discussion of your ratings with the student and University staff is encouraged; please contact the Unit Coordinator to discuss ratings or performance improvement strategies.

Students at risk of failing

It is important to note the following if providing students with a “Working Towards (WT)” grade:

Interim Assessment: Students will be viewed as *'at risk of failing'* where

- They receive *three or more** grades of “WT” against the 12 assessment criteria; or
- Where unprofessional behaviour is identified which leads to the disruption of teaching, learning or research activities of other students/ staff, or which interferes with others performing their normal duties; or
- Where a client/athlete/patient is placed at unnecessary risk or the student fails to identify that a given situation requires skills and competencies beyond those of the student, and does not request assistance from the supervising staff member

*** NOTE:** If a student receives three or more “WT” grades in an interim assessment, you will be contacted by the Unit coordinator to discuss progress and determine whether the student requires a University “*Student Communication and Support Plan*”. Please use your gut instinct and the performance indicators for assessing and do not avoid using a “WT” grade because you don’t wish to upset a student. Ask yourself “Would I be confident to leave the student working alone with a loved one of mine?”. If the answer is “No” or “Not Yet”, then a “WT” grade may be warranted for that criterion. Where you do provide a “WT” grade, we ask that you provide specific feedback and strategies on how to improve that skill area or technique.

Final Assessment: Students may be viewed as *'failed'* where

- They receive *any single* “WT” grade against one the 12 assessment criterion in the Final Competency Assessment; or
- Where unprofessional behaviour has continued after intervention and lead to the disruption of teaching, learning or research activities of other students/staff, or which interferes with others performing their normal duties; or
- Where a client/athlete/patient is repeatedly placed at unnecessary risk or the student fails to identify that a given situation requires skills and competencies beyond those of the student, and does not request assistance from the supervising staff member.

Table 1. Grading Explanations

Working Towards (WT)	Pass (P)	Highly Competent (HC)	Outstanding (O)	Not Applicable (N/A)
Grade Equivalent (fail)	Grade Equivalent (pass)	Grade Equivalent (credit/distinction)	Grade Equivalent (High Distinction)	No Impact on Grade
<p><i>Student does not yet meet minimum standards safe for criterion.</i></p> <p>Knowledge and skills are at an early stage. Does not synthesise information with regard to requirements. Frequently fails to comply with criterion. Requires high level of support, and rarely demonstrates independence. Demonstrates limited understanding of requirements. Put client at increased risk or did not take client safety and comfort into account. Contributes little with regard to criterion.</p>	<p><i>Student is at the minimum safe standard for criterion.</i></p> <p>Basic competency and minimum safe standard are evident. Synthesises information within known context, but requires some assistance with unknown context and/or external parties. Consistently complies with criterion. Requires some support but is independent in familiar/ appropriate contexts. Demonstrates good level understanding of requirements. Considers client safety and comfort. Actively contributes to criterion.</p>	<p><i>Student exceeds the minimum safe standard for criterion.</i></p> <p>Good repertoire of competencies. Synthesises information and applies critically within context at entry-level standard. Level of independence is high, but appropriate. Enthusiastic and proactive. Good understanding of requirements. Actively and consistently considers client safety and comfort. Consistent contribution with regard to criterion.</p>	<p><i>Student well exceeds the minimum safe standard for criterion.</i></p> <p>Extensive repertoire of competencies across diverse client range. Synthesises information and applies critically within context beyond entry-level standard. Level of independence is high, but appropriate. Consistently enthusiastic and proactive. In-depth understanding of requirements. Client safety is paramount consideration. Consistent contribution and leadership with regard to criterion</p>	<p>(A) Criterion not applicable within the context of the facility.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(B) Insufficient observation of the student at the time to make assessment with regard to the given criterion</p>

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Part B: Competency Criteria & Performance Indicators

There are 3 x practice domains (Professional Practice, Technical Skills and Foundational Knowledge). Within these domains, there are 12 x Competency Criteria, and within these there are several “performance indicators” that are the skills and behaviours the student should be working towards and demonstrating whilst on practicum. Supervisors may use these criteria and performance indicators below as a guide to minimum skills and behaviours expected of Exercise Science graduates. If a student ticks off most of, or all the individual performance indicators, you might consider them in the “Highly Competent [HC]” or “Outstanding [O]” grade range. You can use these Performance Indicators as a guide for pre-and post-performance discussions, simulated scenarios and reflections, or to suggest to the student particular tasks to perform for you to observe.

Professional Practice Domain:

1. Demonstrates Professional Behaviour (Competency Criteria)

Performance Indicators:

- The student is appropriate with respect to agreed expectations of dress, grooming, attitude, and behaviour
- Punctual for agreed shifts and in contact in a timely manner where unforeseen circumstances (e.g. ill health or emergency) prevent them from attending placement
- Compliant with your workplace administration requirements, WHS policies, [AES Professional Standards](#), [the AES Scope of Practice](#), [the ESSA Code of Professional Conduct and Ethical Practice](#)
- Understands and practices [value based healthcare](#) (eg. an discuss appropriate amount/duration of services, knows when to refers-on, utilises validated outcome measures)
- Practices inclusively, respects diversity, equality, and the rights of all people in the workplace
- Understands and practices client advocacy and person-centred care
- Gains and records written informed and ongoing-verbal consent according to workplace protocols

2. Demonstrates Appropriate Client Interaction and Rapport Building

Performance Indicators:

- The student displays appropriate self-confidence and has good interpersonal skills
- Is able to influence and develop a sense of authority in their role in both one-on-one and group situations
- Displays appropriate empathy and creates positive, safe interactions with clients
- Maintains client confidentiality
- Maintains appropriate professional boundaries with client (and staff) interactions

3. Demonstrates Self-Management Skills

Performance Indicators:

- The student demonstrates ability to be safely autonomous in their role (e.g. leadership, industriousness, preparedness, willing to complete extra research, forward planning)
- Displays an appropriate level of organisation skill
- Demonstrates the ability to use down time and manage unforeseen events which are out of their control (can prioritise tasks)
- Able to complete tasks on time
- Demonstrates professional self-care (eg. seeks opportunity to debrief at the end of the day, or following stressful situations)

4. Demonstrates Collaborative Practice

Performance Indicators:

- The student engages actively and respectfully with all team members and contributes to discussions or outcomes where appropriate
- Adapts to the workplace setting
- Can resolve conflicts with little support
- Knows how to refer for alternative/additional services appropriately (knows and abides by own scope of practice)

5. Demonstrates Appropriate Communication Skills

Performance Indicators:

- Student is appropriate in terms posture, volume, tone and energy for a diverse range of clientele
- Greet clients appropriately, asks open-ended questions, listens effectively
- Oral, written, and non-verbal communication is appropriate within the work team and to clients
- Displays a flexible and professional communication approach (Uses a range of communication strategies to optimise client rapport and understanding, eg for clients that are hearing impaired, non-English speaking, cognitively impaired, culturally and linguistically diverse. Uses correct technical language where appropriate, avoids jargon and slang words and uses language appropriate to the health literacy of the client.)
- Can draft accurate reports, data handling and interpretation, or project work as appropriate to your worksite
- Correctly utilises digital practices and technology as appropriate to your worksite (eg. software, telehealth, email, health & performance data collection devices)

6. Demonstrates Problem Solving and Decision-Making Skills

Performance Indicators:

- The student can critically analyse situations and demonstrates sound evidence-based reasoning in decision making
- Demonstrates independent thought and action, anticipates problems, and fills gaps
- Solutions to problems are offered prior to direction from supervisors
- Able to follow-through on decisions and apply effective solutions

7. Demonstrates Awareness of own Limitations and Displays Commitment to Ongoing Learning

Performance Indicators:

- The student recognises own professional limitations and actively engages in self-directed learning
- Demonstrates self-evaluation of performance
- Seeks regular feedback and improvement strategies
- Responds in a positive manner to feedback and questions
- Acts on constructive feedback and suggested improvement strategies, to improve future performance
- Willing to take responsibility for decisions when challenged

Technical Skills Domain

8. Demonstrates Appropriate Screening Skills

Performance Indicators:

- The student structures a systematic, purposeful interview seeking qualitative and quantitative details
- Politely controls the interview to be timely and obtain relevant and comprehensive information (medical history, goals, barriers etc), and build rapport
- Notices and responds to important client cues (verbal and non-verbal) relevant to risk screening, during interview
- Correctly stratifies risk for exercise and adheres to Scope of Practice for Exercise Science
- Written case / SOAP notes are clear, concise, comprehensive, and in line with workplace standards and medio-legal requirements

9. Demonstrates Appropriate and Safe Assessment Skills

Performance Indicators:

- The student uses sound clinical reasoning for test choices, which are based on evidence-based practice, client safety, abilities, goals, and restrictions
- Can clearly explain assessment procedures using correct and clear demonstrations where necessary
- Has clear understanding of contraindications for assessment procedures across broad range of client conditions
- Delivers assessments safely, effectively, with validity (in terms of test-retest reliability), and with client comfort in mind
- Chooses, explains and uses appropriate monitoring tools (eg: RPE, dyspnoea, pulse oximetry, visual appearance / non-verbal signals, “talk tests”, verbal feedback)
- Actively notices, seeks and responds to client feedback (verbal and non-verbal) and can safely modify assessments in accordance with client condition, medications (where appropriate), changing risk-factors, feedback, or findings throughout testing
- Correctly interprets assessment findings and implications, and can clearly explain these to clients

10. Demonstrates Appropriate and Safe Exercise Prescription

Performance Indicators:

- The student designs client-centred exercise prescriptions that are safe, enjoyable, innovative, effective, evidence-based, and within Scope of Practice
- Exercise prescriptions address client goals, training stage, functional capacity, medical history, and any other influencing factors
- Can justify exercise choices based on sound clinical reasoning (after research or on the spot)
- Demonstrated ability to regress or progress a program (after research or on the spot)

11. Demonstrates Appropriate and Safe Exercise Delivery

Performance Indicators

- The student understands and can act on contraindications to exercise
- Actively seeks, monitors, recognises, and acts on client feedback, signs, and symptoms (verbal and non-verbal) during exercise
- Can safely modify (regress / progress) exercises immediately- on the spot- in response to client feedback (verbal and non-verbal)
- Safe and effective at delivering exercise to a low-risk *individual*
- Safe and effective at delivering exercise to a low-risk *group*
- Safe and effective at delivering exercise to a mod-high risk client/s with medical conditions, injuries or disabilities prescribed by another qualified health professional (AES or Physio)
- You are confident to briefly leave the student alone with a client and believe they would do no harm
- Applies accurate and appropriate coaching and cueing

Foundational Knowledge Domain:

12. Demonstrates Appropriate Knowledge Base

Performance Indicators:

- The student displays an integrated knowledge base across the client populations of your worksite suitable to their Scope of Practice (eg. in the exercise science related fields of anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, psychology, nutrition, pathophysiology, and exercise-services)
- Able to describe common health or medical interventions within the Scope of Practice for Exercise Science, as appropriate to the client populations of your worksite
- Able to find, critically analyse, and discuss the evidence for exercise interventions across the client populations of your worksite
- Demonstrated application of theories and determinants of behaviour change, and their application in client health empowerment and self-management
- Provides effective information on lifestyle behaviour and change, barrier solving, and goal setting to clients at your worksite
- Accurate and meaningful educational advice is offered to clients
- The student has actively developed further understanding evidence-based practice of exercise assessment, prescription, and delivery (as it relates to your workplace and within their Scope of Practice) during the placement

Thank you for your time and energy in guiding our future Exercise Scientists (ES).
To discuss any aspect of the placement, or competency assessment of ES students
please contact the Unit Coordinator