



Qualification Specification

SP2C12 – VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 2 Certificate in
Instructing Strength and Conditioning

603/6320/4

About VTCT Skills

VTCT Skills is a market-leading specialist vocational and technical Awarding Organisation.

We offer a comprehensive range of qualifications, assessments and services in 17 sectors, including Hairdressing, Beauty, Logistics and Early Years. Working closely with employers and training providers, our ranges are backed by industry and trusted around the world.

With over 3,000 training locations, we help over 120,000 learners achieve professional skills that transform their lives, every year.

For more information, please visit our website or contact our dedicated Customer Support Team via email; customersupport@vtctskills.org.uk or call +44 (0)23 8068 4500.

www.vtctskills.org.uk

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1. Qualification at a glance

Qualification title	VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 2 Certificate in Instructing Strength and Conditioning
Qualification number	603/6320/4
Product code	SP2C12
First registration date	1 st September 2020
Age range	16-18, 19+
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	243
Guided Learning (GL) hours	157
Assessment	To be awarded this qualification, learners must successfully achieve the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External theory examinations• Practical assessments• Portfolio of evidence
Grading	Pass/Fail
Entry requirements	Learners who wish to undertake this qualification must also achieve the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention (COVID-19) for Sport and Fitness Sessions qualification or a regulated equivalent.
Qualification endorsement	<p>This qualification is fully endorsed by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA).</p>  <p>The logo features the CIMSPA crest on the left, followed by the text 'CIMSPA® Endorsed' in a bold, blue font. To the right of a vertical line, the words 'Professional Standards' are written in a bold, blue font.</p>

2. About this qualification

2.1. Who is this qualification for?

The VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 2 Certificate in Instructing Strength and Conditioning is an Occupational Qualification aimed at learners aged 16+ who are either in a full-time Level 2 education programme, a part time programme at a college or with a private training provider, who wish to pursue a career within the fitness industry as a group strength and conditioning training instructor. The qualification is based on the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) professional standards for strength and conditioning trainer.

2.2. What are professional standards?

A professional standard is a framework which defines the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to perform certain tasks relating to a job role. These standards will gradually be embedded into qualifications by Awarding Organisations to replace the current qualifications that are underpinned by national occupational standards (NOS). Within the sport sector these standards are employer led and facilitated by CIMSPA. The CIMSPA professional standards outline the knowledge and skills required to underpin the occupations and job roles within the sport and physical activity sector.

2.3. What does this qualification cover?

The qualification includes all the required elements to work effectively as a strength and conditioning trainer. Learners must achieve all mandatory units which include:

- Anatomy and physiology for exercise and fitness professionals
- Professional practice for exercise and fitness professionals
- Exercise, fitness and lifestyle consultation and management
- Planning and instructing strength and conditioning sessions

Throughout this qualification, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of relevant anatomy and physiology. They will also develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to pre-screen clients and check their readiness to exercise, and health and safety. Learners will develop the knowledge and skills to plan group strength and conditioning training sessions. They will learn how to design and structure group strength and conditioning training sessions. In parallel, learners will develop their communication and customer service skills, their awareness of environmental sustainability and their commercial skills, all of which are valued highly by employers. Problem solving, team working skills and research skills will also be developed.

2.4. What could this qualification lead to?

Learners who achieve this qualification are eligible to become a fitness instructor and register to become a member of the chartered institute for the management of sport and physical activity (CIMSPA). As a strength and conditioning trainer, learners could progress directly into employment in a variety of contexts, which include:

- Commercial gyms
- Public leisure centres
- Private health and fitness clubs
- Sports teams and clubs
- Injury rehabilitation
- Armed forces
- HM prison service
- Cruise liners

Whilst the primary purpose of this qualification is to prepare learners for employment, learners may choose to develop their knowledge and skills further by completing additional qualifications at level 3 in the following areas:

- Gym Instruction
- Personal Training
- Exercise Referral
- Strength and Conditioning Coach

3. Qualification structure

To be awarded the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 2 Certificate in Instructing Strength and Conditioning learners must achieve a pass in all mandatory units.

The minimum TQT required to achieve this qualification is 243.

Product code	Unit title	Level	GL	Unit reference number
Mandatory units				
USP182	Anatomy and physiology for exercise and fitness professionals	2	40	A/617/2590
USP183	Professional practice for exercise and fitness professionals	2	28	F/617/2591
USP184	Exercise, fitness and lifestyle consultation and management	3	50	J/617/2592
USP195	Planning and instructing strength and conditioning sessions	2	39	Y/618/3399

4. Guidance on assessment

4.1. Internal assessors

This qualification is assessed and quality assured by centre staff. Work will be set to improve practical skills, knowledge and understanding. For practical elements, learners will be observed by internal assessors. All work must be collected in a portfolio of evidence and cross-referenced to requirements listed in the unit specifications.

For information on the roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of assessors refer to VTCT Skills Centre Handbook, which can be downloaded from the VTCT Skills website.

4.2. Internal quality assurers (IQAs)

Centres must have an IQA to ensure assessment decisions are consistently applied between assessors, and that learner work is to the required standard. Each assessor's work must be checked and confirmed by the IQA. Assessment decisions must be standardised to ensure that all learners' work has been assessed to the same standard and is fair, valid and reliable.

Evidence of internal quality assurance must be recorded, retained and made available for the external quality assurer (EQA).

For information on the roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of IQAs, and internal quality assurance more generally, refer to VTCT Skills Centre Handbook, which can be downloaded from the VTCT Skills website.

4.3. External quality assurance

An external quality assurer, appointed by VTCT Skills, will visit the centre to sample and quality-check assessments, the internal quality assurance process and the evidence gathered. Between visits EQAs are available to offer advice and guidance on any aspect of quality assurance, via telephone or email; additional quality assurance visits can be arranged.

Random sampling is arranged between the centre and the EQA. The EQA will choose a sample of named learners to cover a variety of skills, knowledge, units and assessors. Through the sampling process the EQA will seek to assure that all assessment decisions made at the centre are consistent, fair, valid, and reliable. The EQA will also seek to confirm that all assessments conducted meet national standards.

4.4. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

TQT is defined under the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition, General Condition J1.8, as the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.

TQT is comprised of the following two elements:

- the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and
- an estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

5. Assessment

5.1. Summary of assessment methods

This qualification comprises internal and external assessments. Learners must achieve the assessments detailed in the table below.

Mandatory units	External	Internal	
	Theory examination	Practical observations	Portfolio of evidence
USP182	✓		
USP183		✓	✓
USP184	✓	✓	
USP195		✓	✓

5.2. External assessment

5.2.1. Theory examination

The theory examination will be set and marked by VTCT Skills. The theory exam will consist of multiple-choice questions. Questions will vary year on year and will cover all learning outcomes within those units that are externally examined.

Examinations must be undertaken by learners under controlled examination conditions in accordance with policies and procedures for external assessment.

5.2.2. Retaking external examinations

Learners who fail to achieve the required Pass mark are permitted to re-sit after having sufficient teaching and additional study time. There is no limit to the number of retakes a learner can carry out. External examinations will be subject to rotation by VTCT Skills. Re-sits are subject to charges as stated in the 'VTCT Skills Service Fees'.

5.2.3. Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

A reasonable adjustment is an adjustment made to an assessment for a qualification that is approved or set in place before an assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the qualification.

Information on the reasonable adjustments and special consideration allowed for the external examinations within this qualification can be found in the document library on the Linx2Exchange section of the VTCT Skills website.

5.3. Internal assessment

5.3.1. Practical observation

Learners must carry out practical observations which must be observed and marked by centre assessors. Assessors will observe the performance of practical tasks and must judge learners' performance against specified assessment criteria stated in the unit specifications. The assessor will sign-off an outcome when all the criteria have been completely achieved.

The practical assessment must take place in a real or realistic working environment on a real or realistic client. Practical assessment of outcomes and learning development requirements (preparing and delivering Strength and Conditioning sessions) must be overseen by someone who has demonstrated their own subject matter expertise as an Accredited Strength and Conditioning Coach (ASCC). Where practically possible, a practical end-point assessment is conducted with 'real participants.'

Practical assessments should be administered towards the end of the period of learning when learners are suitably prepared for assessment. Centres may determine the precise timing of practical assessments to suit local needs. Where evidence is not naturally occurring during practical observations, supplementary evidence may be used where specified within the unit specifications.

5.3.2. Portfolio of evidence

As part of this qualification learners are required to produce a portfolio of evidence which contains assessed evidence covering all the assessment criteria and range (where appropriate) in each unit specification, these can be found on the VTCT Skills website. A portfolio of evidence will confirm the knowledge, understanding and skills the learner must achieve.

The portfolio of evidence will be marked pass or fail by the centre lecturer/assessor and sampled by the EQA.

Evidence in the portfolio may take the following forms (this list is not exhaustive):

- Observed work
- Witness statements
- Written questions
- Professional discussion
- Assignments
- Case studies
- Client consultations

All evidence should be documented in the portfolio and cross-referenced to unit outcomes. Oral questions and professional discussions should be recorded and only used for assessments outlined in specific unit specifications.

5.3.3. Authentication of learner work

The units in this qualification require evidence to be produced for assessment under direct supervision and controlled conditions; some units require learners to produce evidence without supervision.

Where this is the case, centres must be confident that learners' work is authentic. In such cases, learners must complete a Declaration of Authenticity to confirm that the work produced is their own. This must be countersigned by an assessor. A Declaration of Authenticity form is available to download from the VTCT Skills website.

Centres must ensure that all learner evidence is available to the EQA.

The authentication of learner evidence is the responsibility of the centre.

6. Unit structure

Units are available as separate specifications and can be downloaded from the VTCT Skills website. Units that make up this qualification are structured as follows:

Product code	The code allocated by the awarding organisation. This should be used when communicating directly with the awarding organisation.
Title	Reflects the content of the unit.
Unit reference number	This is the unit reference number as detailed on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications.
Level	This represents the level of achievement. The National Qualifications Framework level descriptors and similar qualifications at this level inform the allocation of the unit level.
Guided Learning (GL) hours	All units have GL assigned to them. This is the time a learner spends: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• being taught or given instruction by a lecturer, tutor, supervisor or other appropriate provider of education or training.
Overview	Provides a summary of what learners will cover in a unit, and outlines the knowledge, understanding and skills to be developed.
Learning outcomes	Specify what a learner will know, understand and be able to do as a result of completing a unit.
Assessment criteria	Assessment criteria specify the minimum standard required by the learner to achieve the relevant grade. Learners must provide sufficient and valid evidence to achieve the grade.
Taught content	Provides the basis for the teaching, learning and assessment of each learning outcome. Teachers and tutors should ensure that the full breadth of unit content is delivered.
Assessment requirements	Details the assessments that must be completed and achieved to be awarded a unit. For more information on assessment methods see Section 6 of this specification.

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1.0	14/08/2020	First published	Product and Regulation Manager
v2.0	15/12/2020	CIMSPA endorsed logo added to section 1	Qualifications Administrator
v3.0	11/03/2024	Updated CIMSPA logo	Qualifications Administrator
v4.0	01/01/2025	New branding	Qualifications Administrator