NCFE Active IQ Level 2 Award in Instructing Studio Cycling
QN: 610/5183/4



Qualification Specification

Version 2.0 – November 2026

Qualification summary

Qualification title	**NCFE Active IQ Level 2 Award in Instructing Studio Cycling**
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	610/5183/4
Guided learning hours (GLH)	18
Total qualification time (TQT)	30
Minimum age	16
Qualification purpose	The purpose of this qualification is to provide learners with an understanding of the legal and professional requirements of a studio cycling instructor. Learners are provided with an understanding of the key concepts of studio cycling and how technology can be used in studio cycling sessions. Learners are also provided with the knowledge and skills to be able to plan, prepare and deliver safe and effective studio cycling sessions. This qualification includes the essential knowledge and skills that are needed to meet the requirements of the physical activity sector's minimum standards for deployment.
Grading	Achieved/not yet achieved
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
Work/industry placement experience	Work/industry placement experience is not required.
Apprenticeship standards	This qualification is linked to the following apprenticeship standards: ST0390: Leisure Team Member Apprenticeship standard ST0478: Community Activator Coach Apprenticeship standard
Endorsement	This qualification is endorsed by CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity). CIMSPA Endorsed 10 CIMSPA CPD POINTS
Performance points	Please check the performance points data produced by the Department for Education (DfE) and available online.
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 610/5183/4.

Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.

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Section 1: introduction

Centres must ensure they are using the most recent version of the Qualification Specification on the NCFE website.

Aims and objectives

This qualification aims to:

- focus on the study of instructing studio cycling
- offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge
- provide opportunities to acquire a number of practical and technical skills.

Support Handbook

This Qualification Specification must be used alongside the mandatory Support Handbook, which can be found on the NCFE website. This contains additional supporting information to help with planning, delivery and assessment.

This Qualification Specification contains all the qualification-specific information you will need that is not covered in the Support Handbook.

Guidance for entry and registration

This qualification is designed for qualified fitness instructors wishing to widen their skills to offer studio cycling.

Registration is at the discretion of the centre in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the NCFE Portal.

Learners wishing to undertake this qualification should have achieved a suitable level 2 fitness instructing qualification, for example gym instructing, group training or fitness instructing. Some experience of studio cycling may be useful. The course requires physical exertion and individual participation is essential, therefore a degree of physical fitness is necessary. There is an element of communication (discussing, presenting, reading and writing) involved and learners should have basic skills in communication pitched at level 2.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all learners are capable of achieving the unit and learning outcomes (LOs) and complying with the relevant literacy, numeracy, and health and safety requirements.

Learners registered on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level, or with the same/a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility.

Achieving this qualification

To be awarded this qualification, learners are required to successfully achieve **1** mandatory unit.

Please refer to the list of units in appendix A for further information.

To achieve this qualification, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all LOs of the units as detailed in this Qualification Specification.

Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- employment:
  - studio cycling instructor
  - studio cycling group fitness instructor
- further education:
  - Level 2 Award in Instructing Kettlebell Training
  - Level 2 Award in Instructing Circuit Training
  - Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training
  - Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage Therapy
  - apprenticeship in personal training.

Resource requirements

There are no mandatory resource requirements for this qualification, but centres must ensure learners have access to suitable resources to enable them to cover all the appropriate LOs.

Realistic work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation

The assessment of competence-based criteria should ideally be conducted within the workplace. However, in instances where this is not feasible, learners can be assessed in a realistic work environment (RWE) designed to replicate real work settings.

It is essential for organisations utilising an RWE to ensure it accurately reflects current and authentic work environments. By doing so, employers can be confident that competence demonstrated by a learner in an RWE will be translated into successful performance in employment.

In establishing an RWE, the following factors should be considered.

The work situation being represented is relevant to the competence requirements being assessed:

- the work situation should closely resemble the relevant setting
- equipment and resources that replicate the work situation must be current and available for use to ensure that assessment requirements can be met
- time constraints, resource access and information availability should mirror real conditions.

The learner's work activities reflect those found in the work environment being represented, for example:

- interaction with colleagues and others should reflect expected communication approaches
- tasks performed must be completed to an acceptable timescale
- learners must be able to achieve a realistic volume of work as would be expected in the work situation being represented
- learners operate professionally with clear understanding of their work activities and responsibilities

- feedback from colleagues and others (for example, customers or service users) is maintained and acted upon
- account must be taken of any legislation, regulations or standard procedures that would be followed in the workplace.

How the qualification is assessed

Assessment is the process of measuring a learner's skill, knowledge and understanding against the standards set in a qualification.

This qualification is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

The assessment consists of one component:

- an internally assessed portfolio of evidence, which is assessed by centre staff and externally quality assured by NCFE (internal quality assurance must still be completed by the centre as usual).

Learners must be successful in this component to gain the Level 2 Award in Instructing Studio Cycling.

Learners who are not successful can resubmit work within the registration period; however, a charge may apply in cases where additional external quality assurance visits are required.

Unless otherwise stated in this Qualification Specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English.

Internal assessment

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks to demonstrate achievement of all the LOs associated with each unit. On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the assessor must countersign this.

If a centre needs to create their own internal assessment tasks, there are four essential elements in the production of successful centre-based assessment tasks; these are:

- ensuring the assessment tasks are meaningful with clear, assessable outcomes
- appropriate coverage of the content, LOs or assessment criteria (AC)
- having a valid and engaging context or scenario
- including sufficient opportunities for stretch and challenge for higher attainers.

Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance

This section provides details of the structure and content of this qualification, including grading, level and guided learning hours (GLH).

The types of evidence listed are for guidance purposes only. Within learners' portfolios, other types of evidence are acceptable if all learning outcomes (LOs) are covered, and if the evidence generated can be internally and externally quality assured. For approval of methods of internal assessment other than portfolio building, please contact your external quality assurer (EQA).

The explanation of terms explains how the terms used in the unit content are applied to this qualification. This can be found in section 3.

Unit 01 Planning and instructing studio cycling (T/651/4261)

Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 2**	**18 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
1. Know the legal and professional requirements for studio cycling	1.1 Identify the **legal and ethical responsibilities** of a studio cycling instructor
	1.2 Identify the **professional insurance requirements** for a studio cycling instructor
	1.3 Identify the **health, safety and insurance requirements** when hiring venues and facilities
	1.4 Describe the 'duty of care' relating to the health and safety of self and others
	1.5 Identify the **licensing requirements** for a studio cycling instructor
2. Know the skills, motivations and behaviours needed for delivering studio cycling	2.1 Identify ways that an instructor can help clients have a **positive exercise experience**
	2.2 Identify ways that an instructor can **build social support and inclusion** within a group environment
	2.3 Describe the **physical abilities and coaching skills** that are beneficial for delivering studio cycling
3. Know the key concepts of studio cycling	3.1 Identify the **types of studio cycling sessions**
	3.2 Identify the **benefits of studio cycling** for clients
	3.3 Identify a range of **handlebar grips**
	3.4 Describe the importance of efficient pedalling technique, strokes and cadence
	3.5 Identify the key teaching points for a range of **riding techniques**
	3.6 Describe the **differences** between free and fixed wheel cycling
	3.7 Describe how visualisation techniques can be used to maximise client motivation
	3.8 Identify how different **profiles** can be used to plan studio cycling sessions
	3.9 Describe **how to match music** to different profiles/sections of the session
4. Know the principles of training for studio cycling	4.1 Identify the **muscles that are trained during studio cycling**
	4.2 Describe the importance of **posture** for efficient breathing when cycling
	4.3 Identify **how to monitor intensity** during studio cycling
	4.4 Describe **the importance of rehydration** during studio cycling
	4.5 Identify the difference between aerobic and anaerobic performance in relation to studio cycling
	4.6 Describe the importance of **active recovery** during studio cycling
5. Know how technology can be used in studio cycling	5.1 Identify how **technology** may assist clients to improve their activity levels
	5.2 Describe **how technology can enhance client motivation and focus** to help them achieve their goals

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
	5.3 Identify a range of **ways that fitness professionals can engage with their clients**, using current technology, to include online and on-demand sessions
	5.4 Describe how to **monitor and promote safe exercise technique** when delivering online sessions
6. Know the safety considerations and maintenance requirements when instructing studio cycling	6.1 Identify the **safety considerations** relating to studio cycling
	6.2 Describe the **common injuries** caused by studio cycling and how to avoid these
	6.3 Identify the **common hazards** that may occur within a studio cycling environment
	6.4 Describe **how to deal with common hazards and manage risk** within the studio cycling environment
	6.5 Describe the **appropriate checks** required to ensure the safety and cleanliness of studio cycling equipment
	6.6 Identify the **cleaning substances** that can be used to clean the studio cycling equipment
	6.7 Identify the **regular cycle maintenance** required to ensure the safety of studio cycling equipment
7. Be able to plan a safe and effective studio cycling session	7.1 Gather and record **participant information and complete a risk assessment** to inform the planning of a studio cycling session
	7.2 **Plan a safe and effective studio cycling session** to meet a range of clients' needs
	7.3 Plan adaptations and modifications to regress, progress and accommodate different clients' needs
	7.4 Select **appropriate music** for the session
	7.5 Record the session plan using an appropriate format
8. Be able to prepare clients and deliver safe and effective studio cycling	8.1 Use appropriate techniques and communication skills to **prepare clients for the session**
	8.2 Provide appropriate **advice and guidance** in response to information gathered
	8.3 Explain how to safely **set up the bike** for the session
	8.4 Explain the appropriate **health and safety considerations**
	8.5 Demonstrate the correct posture, hand and seating positions for the different profiles to be used in the session
	8.6 Use the appropriate **instructional and coaching methods** to support clients' performance
	8.7 Use **appropriate music** for components/profiles, for example, genre, speed, volume
	8.8 Use appropriate **voice projection of instruction/coaching** to the whole group
	8.9 Instruct a **safe and effective studio cycling session**
	8.10 Monitor exercise intensity
	8.11 Monitor exercise safety

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
	8.12 Adapt or modify exercises, as appropriate, to accommodate clients' needs
	8.13 Respond accurately/appropriately to clients' questions
9. Be able to evaluate own practice	9.1 Gather **feedback** from participants to review and evaluate practice
	9.2 Evaluate the **safety and effectiveness of the session**
	9.3 Identify ways to improve instructional skills and communication in future sessions
	9.4 Identify ways to improve session content for meeting clients' needs
	9.5 Evaluate the **overall safety** of the studio cycling session

Range

1. Know the legal and professional requirements for studio cycling

1.1 Legal and ethical responsibilities must include:

- participant screening
- recording information
- record keeping
- confidentiality
- inclusion and non-discriminatory practice
- professional boundaries.

1.2 Professional insurance requirements must include:

- public liability insurance
- personal liability insurance
- professional indemnity insurance
- business equipment insurance.

1.3 Health, safety and insurance requirements must include:

- health and safety procedures
- emergency procedures
- first aid responsibilities
- risk assessment requirements
- accident and incident reporting
- proof of qualifications and insurance.

1.5 Licensing requirements must include:

- Performing Right Society (PRS) licence
- Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) licence
- music copyright requirements
- branded programme licensing requirements.

2. Know the skills, motivations and behaviours needed for delivering studio cycling

2.1 Positive exercise experience must include:

- building rapport

Range

- positive communication
- professionalism
- motivation and encouragement
- enthusiasm
- client-centred support.

2.2 Build social support and inclusion must include:

- welcoming participants
- encouraging group interaction
- recognising individual achievements
- adapting communication
- promoting inclusion
- creating a supportive environment.

2.3 Physical abilities and coaching skills must include:

- sufficient fitness levels
- movement awareness
- exercise technique knowledge
- group management skills
- organisation and planning
- motivational coaching.

3. Know the key concepts of studio cycling

3.1 Types of studio cycling sessions must include:

- beat-based
- RPM-based
- watt-based
- heart-rate-based.

3.2 Benefits of studio cycling must include:

- improved cardiovascular efficiency
- improved respiratory efficiency
- improved muscular strength and endurance
- improved stamina
- improved muscular definition
- improved body composition
- lower resting heart rate.

Learners must include a minimum of four benefits.

3.3 Handlebar grips must include:

- narrow grip
- wide grip
- high grip.

Range

3.5 Riding techniques must include:

- seated
- seated climb
- standing climb
- sprinting
- hovering.

3.6 Differences may include:

- pedal movement
- braking requirements
- freewheeling
- safety considerations.

Learners must include a minimum of three differences.

3.8 Profiles must include:

- seated flat
- standing flat
- running
- jumping
- sprint.

3.9 How to match music may include:

- tempo
- rhythm
- intensity
- profile objectives
- class structure.

Learners must include a minimum of three considerations.

4. Know the principles of training for studio cycling

4.1 Muscles that are trained during studio cycling must include:

- quadriceps
- hamstrings
- gastrocnemius
- gluteus maximus
- abdominals
- erector spinae.

4.2 Posture must include:

- spinal alignment
- shoulder position
- head position

Range

- chest position.

4.3 How to monitor intensity must include:

- rate of perceived exertion (RPE)
- cadence.

4.4 The importance of rehydration may include:

- maintaining fluid balance
- supporting performance
- reducing the effects of dehydration
- supporting recovery.

Learners must include a minimum of three benefits.

4.6 Active recovery may include:

- gradual reduction in intensity
- supporting recovery
- reducing post-exercise discomfort
- returning the body to a resting state.

Learners must include a minimum of three considerations.

5. Know how technology can be used in studio cycling

5.1 Technology must include:

- heart rate monitors
- exercise and fitness apps
- wearable fitness tracking devices.

5.2 How technology can enhance client motivation and focus must include:

- monitor progress
- provide performance feedback
- support goal setting
- track activity levels.

Learners must include a minimum of three uses of technology.

5.3 Ways that fitness professionals can engage with their clients must include:

- online sessions
- on-demand sessions.

Learners may include:

- exercise and fitness apps
- social media platforms

Range

- messaging services.

Learners must include online sessions, on-demand sessions and a minimum of one additional method.

5.4 Monitor and promote safe exercise technique may include:

- demonstrations
- observation
- verbal communication
- adaptations and modifications.

Learners must include a minimum of three methods.

6. Know the safety considerations and maintenance requirements when instructing studio cycling

6.1 Safety considerations must include:

- cycle set-up
- appropriate footwear
- suitable clothing
- hydration
- cycle adjustments
- monitoring technique and posture.

6.2 Common injuries must include:

- knee
- back
- hip
- wrist.

6.3 Common hazards may include:

- untied shoelaces
- baggy clothing
- poor cycle set-up
- faulty equipment
- lack of hydration
- towels or clothing becoming caught in equipment.

Learners must include a minimum of four hazards.

6.4 How to deal with common hazards and manage risk may include:

- equipment checks
- cycle set-up
- participant preparation
- participant monitoring
- equipment management.

Range

Learners must include a minimum of four risk management strategies.

6.5 Appropriate checks must include:

- equipment condition
- moving parts
- adjustment mechanisms.

6.6 Cleaning substances may include:

- antibacterial cleaning products
- disinfectant cleaning products
- cleaning wipes
- disposable paper towels
- microfibre cloths.

Learners must include a minimum of three cleaning substances.

6.7 Regular cycle maintenance may include:

- lubrication
- cleaning
- inspection
- adjustment.

Learners must include a minimum of three maintenance requirements.

7. Be able to plan a safe and effective studio cycling session

7.1 Participant information and risk assessment must include:

- session goals, objectives, overview and duration
- number of participants and average age
- group fitness level, cycling experience and technical ability
- health concerns, risks and readiness to exercise
- first aid/emergency arrangements
- potential session hazards and risk-management actions
- studio cycling environment considerations, including equipment, floor surface, ventilation, temperature, space and layout
- participant considerations, including health screening, exercise safety, exercise intensity, clothing, footwear and additional needs
- bike setup considerations.

Learners must identify a minimum of one hazard from each area:

- participant-related hazards
- equipment-related hazards
- environmental hazards.

7.2 Plan a safe and effective studio cycling session must include:

Range

- session goals and objectives
- warm-up, main component and cool-down
- song title/timings for each component
- riding and hand positions
- resistance/load
- session profile
- intensity using RPE, heart rate or Borg scale
- appropriate recovery periods
- teaching points/instructions
- visualisation techniques where appropriate
- progressions, regressions and alternatives
- bike setup considerations.

Learners must plan for a session lasting for 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

7.4 Appropriate music must include consideration of:

- atmosphere
- motivation
- participant group
- component of the session
- session profile
- tempo/speed
- volume
- lyrics/content suitability.

8. Be able to prepare clients and deliver safe and effective studio cycling

8.1 Preparing clients for the session must include:

- greeting participants and building rapport
- gathering information and checking readiness to exercise
- identifying whether participants need to proceed, defer or be referred
- explaining relevant health and safety considerations
- checking participant understanding.

8.2 Advice and guidance must include:

- when to signpost to a medical professional
- when to defer training
- when to allow participation in training to proceed.

8.3 Bike set-up must include:

- handlebar adjustment
- saddle height
- saddle fore/aft position
- foot and pedal position
- pedals straps or secure foot placement.

Range

8.4 Health and safety considerations must include:

- safe braking/stopping
- resistance control
- pedal straps or secure foot placement
- water/hydration
- towel
- participant readiness and wellbeing
- emergency arrangements
- safe and clean equipment use.

8.6 Instructional and coaching methods may include:

- demonstration
- explanation
- observation
- feedback
- coaching cues
- motivation and encouragement
- use of voice.

Learners must use a minimum of four methods.

8.7 Appropriate music considerations must include:

- lyrics/content suitability
- genre
- volume
- tempo/speed
- motivational effect
- component/profile of the session.

8.8 Voice projection of instruction/coaching may include:

- correct audio set-up
- clear communication
- appropriate volume and voice projection.

Learners must cover a minimum of two.

8.9 Safe and effective studio cycling session must include a warm-up, main component and cool down:

The warm-up must include:

- clear verbal instruction
- safe and effective riding techniques and hand positions
- correct exercise technique and movement speed
- appropriate music and music tempo

Range

- gradual progression of exercise intensity
- observation and response to participants' performance
- teaching points to correct and improve performance
- monitoring participant safety and wellbeing
- achievement of the intended warm-up purpose.

The main component must include:

- safe and effective riding techniques and hand positions
- seated and standing cycling techniques
- changes in cadence and resistance
- appropriate recovery periods
- correct exercise technique and movement speed
- effective teaching positions to observe and correct participants
- observation and response to participants' performance
- teaching points, cueing and feedback
- appropriate music and music speed
- group motivation and praise
- monitoring and progression of exercise intensity
- achievement of the intended purpose of the main component.

The cool-down must include:

- safe and effective cool-down activities
- flexibility exercises for the major muscles used during cycling
- safe riding techniques and hand positions
- correct exercise technique and movement speed
- appropriate music and music tempo
- gradual reduction of cadence, resistance and exercise intensity
- observation and response to participants' performance
- teaching points to correct and improve performance
- achievement of the intended cool-down purpose.

Learners must deliver a session lasting for 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

9. Be able to evaluate own practice

9.1 Feedback may include:

- verbal feedback
- written feedback
- individual feedback
- group feedback.

9.2 Safety and effectiveness of the session must include:

- session structure
- selected activities and equipment
- instructional skills
- communication.

Range
9.5 Overall safety considerations must include: • participant safety • equipment safety • environment safety.

NCFE assessment strategy

The key requirements of the assessment strategies or principles that relate to units in this qualification are summarised below.

The centre must ensure that individuals undertaking assessor or quality assurer roles within the centre conform to the assessment requirements for the unit they are assessing or quality assuring.

Knowledge LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make assessment decisions
- internal quality assurers (IQAs) will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

Competence/skills LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally competent and qualified to make assessment decisions
- IQAs will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

The centre with which the learners are registered will be responsible for making all assessment decisions. Assessors must be **contracted** to work directly with the centre, contributing to all aspects of standardisation. The centre must ensure a process of training is followed, including during induction and quality assurance activities. Occupationally competent and qualified assessors from the centre must use direct observation to assess practical skills-based outcomes.

Section 3: explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at **level 2** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

Apply	Link existing knowledge to new or different situations.
Assess	Consider information in order to make decisions.
Classify	Organise according to specific criteria.
Compare	Examine the subjects in detail, looking at similarities and differences.
Define	State the meaning of a word or phrase.
Demonstrate	Show an understanding of the subject or how to apply skills in a practical situation.
Describe	Write about the subject giving detailed information.
Differentiate	Give the differences between two or more things.
Discuss	Write an account giving more than one view or opinion.
Distinguish	Show or recognise the difference between items/ideas/information.
Estimate	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge.
Explain	Provide details about the subject with reasons showing how or why. Some responses could include examples.
Give (positive and negative points)	Provide information showing the advantages and disadvantages of the subject.
Identify	List or name the main points or otherwise characterise.
Illustrate	Give clear information using written examples, pictures or diagrams.
List	Make a list of key words, sentences or comments that focus on the subject.
Perform	Do something (take an action/follow an instruction) that the question or task asks or requires.
Plan	Think about and organise information in a logical way. This could be presented as written information, a diagram, an illustration or other suitable format.
Provide	Give relevant information about a subject.
Reflect	Learners should look back on their actions, experiences or learning and think about how this could inform their future practice.

Select	Choose for a specific purpose.
State	Give the main points clearly in sentences.
Use	Take or apply an item, resource or piece of information as asked in the question or task.

Section 4: support

Support materials

The following support materials are available to assist with the delivery of this qualification and are available on the NCFE website:

- learning resources
- Qualification Factsheet.

Other support materials

The resources and materials used in the delivery of this qualification must be age-appropriate and due consideration should be given to the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners in line with your institute's safeguarding policy when developing or selecting delivery materials.

Products to support the delivery of this qualification may be available. For more information about these resources and how to access them, please visit the NCFE website.

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Version 2.0 November 2026
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To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

Appendix A: units

To simplify cross-referencing assessments and quality assurance, we have used a sequential numbering system in this document for each unit

Mandatory units

Unit number	Regulated unit number	Unit title	Level	GLH
Unit 01	T/651/4261	Planning and instructing studio cycling	2	18

Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
AIQ007269	August 2026	Document published.
v2.0	November 2026	Qualification title changed and template updated to new version. Minor wording updates have been made to assessment criteria (AC) to improve clarity and consistency. No changes to learning outcomes (LOs), guided learning hours (GLH) or content requirements.