NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma in Supporting Clients with Long-Term Conditions
QN: 603/5836/1



Qualification Specification

Qualification summary

Qualification title	**NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma in Supporting Clients with Long-Term Conditions**
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	603/5836/1
Guided learning hours (GLH)	309
Total qualification time (TQT)	674
Minimum age	16
Qualification purpose	The purpose of this qualification is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to be able to support clients living with a range of one or more long-term condition(s), by encouraging them to lead healthier, more active lives to better manage their symptoms through effective behaviour-change techniques, lifestyle advice and safe and effective exercise prescription.
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.
Occupational standards	The qualification is underpinned by the overarching professional standards for: • The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) Learning and Development Requirements (LDR): ○ Working with People with Long-term Conditions.
Endorsement	This qualification is endorsed by CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity).
UCAS	Please refer to the UCAS website for further details of points allocation and the most up-to-date information.
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 603/5836/1.

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 supporting clients with long-term conditions
- 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 fitness professionals who wish to support clients/participants with physical activity, who have one or more long-term condition(s) and are within the scope of competence, or individuals looking to work in a clinical setting as part of a multi-disciplinary team focused on physical activity for patients with long-term conditions.

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 must have a suitable level 2 qualification in fitness/gym instructing (not including instructing children), or one of the following:

- a suitable level 3 qualification in personal training
- Level 3 Diploma in Instructing Pilates Matwork
- Level 3 Diploma in Teaching Yoga.

There is also an element of communication (discussing, presenting, reading and writing) involved; learners should therefore have basic skills in communication pitched at level 1.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all learners are capable of achieving the units 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 **5 units** from the mandatory units.

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. A partial certificate may be requested for learners who do not achieve the full qualification but have achieved at least one whole unit; partial achievement certificate fees can be found in the Fees and Pricing document on the NCFE website.

Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- further education:
  - Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training
  - Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage Therapy.

Progression to higher-level studies

Level 3 qualifications can support progression to higher-level study, which requires knowledge and skills different from those gained at levels 1 and 2. Level 3 qualifications enable learners to:

- apply factual, procedural and theoretical subject knowledge
- use relevant knowledge and methods to address complex, non-routine problems
- interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas
- understand the nature of the area of study or work
- demonstrate an awareness of different perspectives and approaches
- identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills
- use appropriate research to inform actions
- review and evaluate the effectiveness of their own methods.

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 3 Diploma in Supporting Clients with Long-Term Conditions.

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 Applied anatomy and physiology for exercise, health and fitness (F/615/4012)

Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 3**	**45 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
1. Know the structure and function of the cardiovascular system in relation to health and fitness	1.1 Describe the **structures** of the heart and their functions
	1.2 List the order in which blood flows through the cardiovascular system
	1.3 Explain the stages of progression in atherosclerosis
	1.4 Describe the immediate blood pressure response to exercise, to include: • the Valsalva manoeuvre.
	1.5 Describe the effects of different forms of exercise training on blood pressure over time
	1.6 Identify the blood pressure classifications and associated health risks
	1.7 Describe the cardiovascular benefits and adaptations to **different forms of exercise**
2. Know the structure and function of the skeletal system structure in relation to health and fitness	2.1 Identify the anatomical planes of motion for different joint actions and exercises
	2.2 Identify the joint actions and typical ranges of movement of the major joints of the body
	2.3 Describe the benefits and risks of weight-bearing exercise for the bones and joints
	2.4 Describe the common injury risks at each of the major joints and the movements that are likely to cause them
	2.5 Explain common postural patterns, their associated muscle imbalances and the problems these can cause
	2.6 Describe the relationship between the structure and function of the skeleton
3. Know the structure and function of the myofascial system in relation to health and fitness	3.1 Describe the structure and function of muscle fibres and their components
	3.2 Describe the stages of the sliding filament theory
	3.3 Describe the effects of exercise intensity and duration on muscle fibre recruitment and adaptation by the different muscle fibre types
	3.4 Name the locations of the attachment sites for the major muscles of the body
	3.5 Explain the isolated muscle actions responsible for producing specific body movements
	3.6 Explain the roles of muscles in integrated movements of the body compared to their isolated muscle actions
	3.7 Identify causative factors, symptoms and recovery strategies for delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS)
	3.8 Describe the structure and functions of the different types of connective tissue

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
4. Know the structure and function of the nervous system in relation to health and fitness	4.1 Describe the **components of the nervous system**
	4.2 Describe the structure and function of a neuron
	4.3 Describe the structure and function of a motor unit
	4.4 State the 'all or nothing' law of muscle contraction and the size principle of motor unit recruitment
	4.5 Explain the stages in the process of the stretch reflex and inverse stretch reflex
	4.6 Describe the structure and function of muscle spindles
	4.7 Describe the structure and function of Golgi tendon organs
	4.8 Explain the definition and function of autogenic inhibition
	4.9 Explain the definition and function of reciprocal inhibition
	4.10 Explain the neuromuscular adaptations associated with different types of exercise and their benefits for performance
5. Know the structure and function of the endocrine system in relation to health and fitness	5.1 Describe the role of the endocrine system
	5.2 Describe the location, structure and functions of the endocrine glands of the body
	5.3 Describe the main functions of **hormones** in the body
	5.4 Explain the lifestyle factors that affect endocrine health
6. Understand the role of the energy systems in relation to physical activity, exercise and training	6.1 Describe the energy substrates and by-products of each energy system
	6.2 Explain the processes by which adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is re-synthesised in each energy system
	6.3 Explain the relative contribution of each energy system to total energy expended in activities with **different characteristics**
7. Know the structure and function of the digestive system in relation to health and fitness	7.1 Describe the structure of each section of the gastrointestinal tract in relation to its functions
	7.2 Describe the location and functions of each of the digestive organs
	7.3 Explain the role of the digestive system in maintaining health
	7.4 Explain the implications of different dietary practices for the digestive system
	7.5 Explain the importance of physical activity for digestive system health

Range
1. Know the structure and function of the cardiovascular system in relation to health and fitness
1.1 Structures include: • chambers • valves • blood vessels. **1.7 Different forms of exercise** include: • endurance training • interval training • resistance training • relaxation training.

Range
4. Know the structure and function of the nervous system in relation to health and fitness
4.1 Components of the nervous system to include: • central nervous system • peripheral nervous system • somatic branch of the peripheral nervous system • autonomic branch of the peripheral nervous system.
5. Know the structure and function of the endocrine system in relation to health and fitness
5.3 Hormones to include: • growth hormone • thyroid hormones • corticosteroids • catecholamines • insulin • glucagon.
6. Understand the role of the energy systems in relation to physical activity, exercise and training
6.3 Different characteristics to include: • intensity • duration • type.

Unit 02 The health landscape (A/618/1094)

Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 3**	**21 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
1. Understand the prevalence of long-term conditions in the UK	1.1 Explain what is meant by a long-term condition
	1.2 Describe the prevalence of people living with long-term conditions
	1.3 Describe the socio-economic impact of the increasing number of people living with long-term conditions
2. Understand the prevalence of lifestyle behaviours associated with long-term conditions	2.1 Describe the prevalence of lifestyle behaviours associated with long-term conditions, to include: • physical inactivity • poor diet • stress • sleep deprivation • smoking and drugs • alcohol misuse.
3. Understand the socio-demographic causes of long-term conditions in the UK	3.1 Describe the World Health Organization's determinants of health
	3.2 Compare local and national health inequalities and how they correlate with lifestyle behaviours
	3.3 Analyse the statistics that relate to the ageing population of the UK
	3.4 Explain why the UK has an ageing population
	3.5 Outline the long-term conditions commonly associated with ageing
	3.6 Explain the socio-economic impact of an ageing population
4. Understand the ageing process and the implications for health and well-being	4.1 Explain the physiological changes associated with ageing, to include: • musculoskeletal • cardiorespiratory • neurological.
	4.2 Explain how ageing can affect functional capacity and independence

Unit 03 Managing long-term conditions(F/618/1095)

Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 4**	**111 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
1. Understand the aetiology of the most prevalent long-term conditions	1.1 Outline the prevalence of a range of **long-term conditions** in the UK
	1.2 Describe the aetiology, pathology and signs and symptoms of the long-term conditions identified
	1.3 Describe medical terminology that is pertinent to the long-term conditions identified
2. Understand common comorbidities and multimorbidities	2.1 Explain what is meant by comorbidities and multimorbidities
	2.2 Identify common comorbidities and multimorbidities and their prevalence
	2.3 Outline the impact of comorbidities and multimorbidities on health outcomes
	2.4 Describe the challenges associated with the management of comorbidities and multimorbidities
3. Understand the medical management of long-term conditions	3.1 Describe medications that are prescribed to manage the long-term conditions identified, to include: • action • side effects • precautions.
	3.2 Describe surgical interventions that are administered to manage the long-term conditions identified
	3.3 Describe how medication and surgical interventions can impact quality of life, functional and mental capacity and exercise tolerance
4. Understand the lifestyle management of long-term medical conditions	4.1 Describe the benefits of lifestyle changes that are recommended to manage the long-term conditions identified
	4.2 Explain the exercise limitations associated with the long-term conditions identified, including: • functional • cognitive • biopsychosocial.
	4.3 Explain the physiology and psychology of pain and how this may impact the functional and mental capacity of an individual
	4.4 Explain the importance of positive mental health and well-being when working with clients with long-term conditions
5. Understand the risk factors associated with physical activity for clients with long-term conditions	5.1 Describe the relative and absolute contraindications associated with physical activity
	5.2 Describe the signs and symptoms associated with long-term conditions, which could put clients at risk during a physical activity session
	5.3 Describe the appropriate action that should be taken when clients present with **signs and symptoms** during a physical activity session

Range
1.1, 1.2,1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2 Long-term conditions must include: • diabetes and metabolic conditions • cardiorespiratory conditions • musculoskeletal conditions • mental health conditions • cancers • neurological conditions • chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) • dementia-related conditions • hypo/hyperthyroidism.
5. Understand the risk factors associated with physical activity for clients with long-term conditions
5.3 Signs and symptoms must include the signs and symptoms associated with long-term conditions described in 5.2.

Unit 04 Behaviour change for clients with long-term conditions (L/618/1097)

Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 3**	**69 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
1. Understand behaviour-change theories and techniques	1.1 Describe a range of behaviour-change theories, for example: • health belief model • self-determination theory • transtheoretical model (TTM) • COM-B.
	1.2 Describe the communication skills involved in effective behaviour change, to include: • building a rapport • listening • questioning • reflective statements • paraphrasing • summarising • use of silence.
	1.3 Describe a range of behaviour-change techniques, for example: • motivational interviewing • solution-focused brief therapy • cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) • positive psychology.
	1.4 Carry out research linking behaviour change with increases in physical activity
	1.5 Describe emerging trends and initiatives that support behaviour change in relation to increases in physical activity
	1.6 Explain how to structure and deliver a consultation that facilitates behaviour change
	1.7 Explain how behaviour-change techniques can be adapted to support both individuals and groups
	1.8 Compare the evidence for face-to-face and remote behaviour-change support
	1.9 Explain how face-to-face and remote behaviour-change techniques can be combined to best support clients with long-term conditions
	1.10 Describe the common barriers for clients with long-term conditions to changing their lifestyle behaviour
	1.11 Describe the motivators that could support clients with long-term conditions in changing their lifestyle behaviour
	1.12 Describe common goals for clients with long-term conditions
	1.13 Explain how to translate common client goals into appropriate SMART goals
2. Understand current lifestyle advice and how	2.1 Outline recognised physical activity guidelines for healthy individuals and those with long-term conditions, to include:

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
to educate people with long-term conditions	• Public Health England physical activity guidelines • NICE clinical guidelines.
	2.2 Outline recommendations for other lifestyle behaviours, to include: • healthy eating • smoking cessation.
	2.3 Explain how to educate clients on the principles of self-management, so they can maintain positive behaviour change beyond the programme
3. Understand pre-exercise screening and assessment for people living with long-term conditions	3.1 Explain the importance of pre-exercise screening and informed consent
	3.2 Describe a range of pre-exercise screening methodologies, for example: • PAR-Q • PAR-Q+ • condition-specific screening tools.
	3.3 Describe a range of physical, functional and clinical assessments for people with long-term conditions
	3.4 Describe the information that should be collected as part of pre-exercise screening and assessment
	3.5 Describe a range of risk stratification tools, for example: • ACSM • Irwin and Morgan • condition-specific risk stratification tools.
4. Be able to collect client information as part of a consultation, including: • health screening • physical, functional and clinical assessments • goal setting.	4.1 Interpret medical/clinical information from referring health professionals
	4.2 Collect detailed and accurate screening information, to include: • health screening • informed consent • lifestyle behaviours • condition-specific information, for example: ○ medication ○ surgery ○ stage/severity.
	4.3 Risk stratify clients based on the information collected
	4.4 Select and conduct safe and appropriate physical, functional and/or clinical assessments
	4.5 Interpret the results of assessments into meaningful information
	4.6 Agree goals with clients that are SMART and relate to their condition(s)

Unit 05 Planning and adapting physical activity for clients with long-term conditions (M/618/1108)

Assessment			
Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	**Achieved/not yet achieved**	**Level 3**	**63 GLH**

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	**Assessment criteria (AC)** The learner can:
1. Understand how to plan a physical activity programme for clients with long-term conditions	1.1 Describe how to adapt physical activity sessions for a range of environments, for example: • gym • individuals' homes • community halls • outdoor spaces.
	1.2 Explain the safety considerations when working in a range of environments
	1.3 Describe a range of equipment that can be used to deliver physical activity sessions
	1.4 Describe a range of activity types that can be incorporated into physical activity sessions
2. Understand how to monitor and adapt physical activity programmes for clients with long-term conditions	2.1 Describe how to select appropriate **monitoring methods**
	2.2 Explain the benefits and limitations of using monitoring methods for a range of long-term conditions
	2.3 Explain how to monitor participant progress throughout a physical activity programme
	2.4 Explain how to adapt a physical activity programme
3. Be able to plan physical activity programmes for clients with long-term conditions	3.1 Plan safe and effective physical activity programmes that: • are appropriate to the client's long-term condition(s) and medication • consider the pre-exercise consultation information collected, including screening, physical assessments, barriers and goals • are consistent with accepted good practice and recognised guidelines.
	3.2 Identify the activities, equipment and environment(s) required to deliver physical activity programmes
	3.3 Carry out appropriate risk assessments on the activities, equipment and environment
	3.4 Identify and prescribe physical activity opportunities that are not part of the one-to-one programme, which align with the client's motivators
	3.5 Prescribe activities of daily living that will support the client in improving their health and well-being
4. Understand the scope of practice of exercise professionals when working with clients with long-term conditions	4.1 Describe the roles and responsibilities of exercise professionals working with clients with long-term conditions
	4.2 Describe the roles of other health professionals involved in supporting clients with long-term conditions, for example: • clinicians • referring professionals

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
	• dieticians • health trainers • managers/co-ordinators.
	4.3 Describe the scope of practice of exercise professionals when working with people with long-term conditions
	4.4 Explain when, and to whom, participants should be referred when they are out of scope of practice
	4.5 Explain when exercise should be deferred
	4.6 Describe industry codes of conduct in relation to working with clients with long-term conditions
	4.7 Describe the insurance requirements when working with clients with long-term conditions
5. Understand continuing professional development opportunities when working with clients with long-term conditions	5.1 Explain the importance of continuing professional development when working with clients with long-term conditions
	5.2 Describe continuing professional development opportunities for exercise professionals working with clients with long-term conditions

Range
2. Understand how to monitor and adapt physical activity programmes for clients with long-term conditions
2.1 and 2.2 Monitoring methods must include: • talk test • heart rate • rate of perceived exertion (RPE) • observation • questioning techniques.

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: 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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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	F/615/4012	Applied anatomy and physiology for exercise, health and fitness	3	45
Unit 02	A/618/1094	The health landscape	3	21
Unit 03	F/618/1095	Managing long-term conditions	4	111
Unit 04	L/618/1097	Behaviour change for clients with long-term conditions	3	69
Unit 05	M/618/1108	Planning and adapting physical activity for clients with long-term conditions	3	63

The units above may be available as stand-alone unit programmes. Please visit the NCFE website for further information.

Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
AIQ005843	April 2020	Document published.
AIQ007273	August 2026	Updates made to assessment method; the units are assessed by an internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
AIQ007282	August 2026	Guided learning hours (GLH) have been updated.
v4.0	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.