NATIONAL STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING ASSOCIATION

STANDARDS AND REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

CERTIFIED STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING SPECIALIST® (CSCS®)

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

1A. Ensure the university has appropriate approvals from the State, the regional accreditor (if applicable), and the institution to offer the program. Institution has authority to grant the degree.

1B. The program must demonstrate that a needs analysis has been conducted to show that the program has the resources to offer the program, and that employment opportunities for its graduates are consistent with the program mission, goals, and expected outcomes.

1C. Ensure that the program can devote faculty resources to sustain appropriate student-to-faculty ratios to maintain safety and promote an effective learning environment.

1D. The program must demonstrate that the program fits within the overall mission of the university.

1E. The program must verify the ability to offer a baccalaureate degree that encompasses the content areas as specified in Section 3 under "CURRICULUM".

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Documentation of regional accreditation; institutionally accepted needs analysis demonstrating local, regional or national demand; documentation on student-to-faculty ratios as well as rationale behind those ratios; stated mission of both the institution and the program, and how they are interrelated; evidence of curricular map that leads to the designated Bachelor of Science degree.

FACULTY

2A. Program Director: The Program Director is the person responsible for administering the academic program, ensuring program compliance with all applicable state rules and regulations, institutional and program policies, and the Standards for accreditation. The Program Director must:

2A.1 Be a full-time employee of the sponsoring institution.

2A.2 Have full faculty status, rights, responsibilities, privileges, and voting rights as defined by institution policy, consistent with similar positions at the institution necessary to provide appropriate program representation in institutional decisions.

2A.3 Have programmatic administrative and supervisory responsibility assignment that is consistent with other similar assignments within the degree-granting unit at the institution.

2A.4 Oversee and evaluate program-specific course content and curricular efficacy, including faculty performance specific to strength and conditioning courses.

2A.5 Have administrative release time. The Program Director's release time must be equivalent to similar allied health science programs in the institution. If no

such similar program exists at the institution, then must be benchmarked against other peer institutions. If there is no standard by which to compare, recommended release time should be approximately 50%.

2A.6 Responsibilities must include input to and assurance of the following program features:

(a) ongoing compliance with the Standards;
(b) planning, development, implementation, delivery, documentation, and assessment of all components of the curriculum;
(c) Effective leadership in areas such as internship, strategic planning, resources, and budget.

2A.7 Program Director Qualifications:

(a) Have a terminal degree in related field.
(b) The Program Director is qualified commensurate with other administrative positions within similar health science programs in the institution. If no such similar program exists at the institution, then must be benchmarked against other peer institutions. Academic rank and tenure status are determined by the institution according to institutional policy.
(c) Must maintain and be in good standing with CSCS certification.
(d) Have experience with curriculum and/or program development.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Current CSCS certification; curriculum vitae showing professional attainment/scholarship; workload and documentation showing that the Program Director is a full-time faculty member; evidence of qualification (curriculum vitae documenting evidence of appropriate professional and academic achievement) to be in Program Director role.

2B. Internship Coordinator: A faculty member (the Program Director or other duly appointed faculty) must be identified as the Internship Coordinator. The Internship Coordinator must:

2B.1 Be allowed release/reassigned workload to meet the institutional responsibilities for the internship experience. The Internship Coordinator's release time must be comparable to similar health science programs in the institution. If no such similar program exists at the institution, then benchmark with peer institutions.

2B.2 Responsibilities of the Internship Coordinator:

(a) The Internship Coordinator must assure the following:
1. Student internship placement
2. Student competency progression;
3. Internship site evaluation;
4. Student evaluation;

5. Internship Site Supervisor training;
6. Internship Site Supervisor evaluation.
7. Frequent communication with the internship site supervisors.

2B.3 Qualifications

(a) Have a Master's degree in related field.

(b) The Internship Coordinator is qualified commensurate with other coordinator positions within similar health science programs in the institution. If no such similar program exists at the institution, then benchmark with peer institutions. Academic rank and tenure-status are determined by the institution according to institutional policy.

(c) Must maintain and be in good standing with CSCS certification.

(d) Have experience with internship oversight and development.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Current CSCS certification; Curriculum Vitae showing professional attainment/scholarship; evidence of qualification (curriculum vitae and/or resume documenting evidence of appropriate professional and/or academic achievement) to be in Internship Coordinator role.

2C. Strength and Conditioning Faculty: The teaching faculty of the strength and conditioning educational program shall be identified as those faculty members responsible for teaching in the required subject matter areas specified in Section 3 under "CURRICULUM", and other didactic course work included in the strength and conditioning curriculum as identified by the institution. Members of the teaching faculty must have formal appointments in the academic unit and must be financially compensated for their services. Rank and tenure-status are determined by the institution per their policy. All faculty assigned and responsible for the instruction of strength and conditioning knowledge, skills, and abilities in required coursework must:

2C.1 Be qualified through professional preparation and experienced in their respective academic areas as determined by the institution.

2C.2 Be CSCS certified if a member of the core faculty*.

(a) *Core faculty are those faculty who teach courses with content specific to strength and conditioning as defined in sections 3F through 3J under "CURRICULUM".

2C.3 Be recognized by the institution as having instructional responsibilities for the program.

2C.4 Incorporate the most current strength and conditioning knowledge, skills, and abilities as they pertain to their respective teaching areas.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Appropriate certifications; professional attainment/scholarship; evidence of qualification (curriculum vitae documenting evidence of appropriate professional and/or academic achievement) to be in faculty role.

2D. Strength and Conditioning Faculty Number: In addition to the Program Director, the number of full-time faculty must meet the needs of the program and be consistent with similar programs at the institution. Tenure and rank may be determined by the institution.

2D.1 Strength and Conditioning Faculty:

(a) Based on the program's student enrollment, the number of strength and conditioning faculty must be sufficient to:
   1. advise and mentor students
   2. meet program outcomes
   3. allow the institution to offer strength and conditioning courses on a regular, planned basis
   4. maintain student-to-faculty ratios that allow for effective instruction and evaluation as consistent with other health science programs. If the institution does not sponsor other health science programs, this standard must be benchmarked against other peer institutions with accredited strength and conditioning programs

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Faculty workload data; teaching responsibilities; other university-required responsibilities.

2D.2 Internship Site Supervisor:

(a) Be CSCS certified.
(b) Ensure that student interns are directly supervised by CSCS certified individuals during day-to-day activities.
(c) Supervise students during strength and conditioning education.
(d) Provide instruction and assessment of the current knowledge, skills, and abilities designated by the NSCA's Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines (Section 3 under "CURRICULUM" of this document).
(e) Provide instruction and opportunities for students to develop strength and conditioning proficiencies, communication skills and decision-making during actual athlete strength and conditioning experiences.
(f) Provide assessment of strength and conditioning proficiencies, communication skills, and decision-making during actual athlete strength and conditioning experiences.

(g) Demonstrate understanding of and compliance with the program's policies and procedures.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Appropriate certifications; professional attainment/scholarship; evidence of qualification to be in site supervisor role.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum is developed, implemented, and revised to reflect clear statements of expected student outcomes that are congruent with:

- the program's mission and goals,
- the NSCA's Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines,
- the roles for which the program is preparing its graduates.

The program must have a strength and conditioning degree designator (e.g., concentration, emphasis, minor, etc.), but is not required to be a major. Curriculum must be of appropriate length and credit hours (as determined by the institutional policies and regional accreditors) to fulfill requirements for the chosen degree designation.

Sequencing of the curriculum must provide proper progression of student learning of required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Policies must be in place to allow for student remediation.

Curriculum must include the following areas of instruction:

3A. Human Anatomy and Physiology

- 3A1. Structure and Function of Body Systems
- 3A2. Musculoskeletal System
- 3A3. Neuromuscular System
- 3A4. Cardiovascular System
- 3A5. Respiratory System

3B. Exercise Physiology

- 3B1. Bioenergetics of Exercise and Training
- 3B2. Biological Energy Systems
- 3B3. Substrate Depletion and Repletion
- 3B4. Bioenergetic Limiting Factors in Exercise Performance
- 3B5. Oxygen Uptake and the Aerobic and Anaerobic Contributions to Exercise
- 3B6. Metabolic Specificity of Training
- 3B7. Endocrine Responses to Resistance Exercise
- 3B8. Synthesis, Storage, and Secretion of Hormones
- 3B9. Muscle as the Target for Hormone Interactions

3B10. Role of Receptors in Mediating Hormonal Changes
3B11. Categories of Hormones
3B12. Heavy Resistance Exercise and Hormonal Increases
3B13. Mechanisms of Hormonal Interactions
3B14. Hormonal Changes in Peripheral Blood
3B15. Adaptations in the Endocrine System
3B16. Primary Anabolic Hormones
3B17. Adrenal Hormones
3B18. Other Hormonal Considerations

3C. Kinesiology/Biomechanics

3C.1 Biomechanics of Resistance Exercise
3C.2 Skeletal Musculature
3C.3 Anatomical Planes and Major Body Movements
3C.4 Human Strength and Power
3C.5 Sources of Resistance to Muscle Contraction
3C.6 Joint Biomechanics: Concerns in Resistance Training

3D. Sports Nutrition

3D.1 Basic Nutrition Factors in Health
3D.2 Role of Sport Nutrition Professionals
3D.3 Standard Nutrition Guidelines
3D.4 Macronutrients
3D.5 Vitamins
3D.6 Minerals
3D.7 Fluid and Electrolytes
3D.8 Nutrition Strategies for Maximizing Performance
3D.9 Pre-Competition, During-Event, and Post-Competition Nutrition
3D.10 Nutrition Strategies for Altering Body Composition
3D.11 Feeding and Eating Disorders
3D.12 Performance-Enhancing Substances and Methods
3D.13 Types of Performance-Enhancing Substances
3D.14 Hormones
3D.15 Dietary Supplements

3E. Psychology of Sport and Exercise

3E.1 Psychology of Athletic Preparation and Performance
3E.2 Role of Sport Psychology
3E.3 Ideal Performance State
3E.4 Energy Management: Arousal, Anxiety, and Stress

3E.5 Influence of Arousal and Anxiety on Performance
3E.6 Motivation
3E.7 Attention and Focus
3E.8 Psychological Techniques for Improved Performance
3E.9 Enhancing Motor Skill Acquisition and Learning

3F. Scientific Principles of Strength and Conditioning

3F.1 Adaptations to Anaerobic Training Programs
3F.2 Neural Adaptations
3F.3 Muscular Adaptations
3F.4 Connective Tissue Adaptations
3F.5 Endocrine Responses and Adaptations to Anaerobic Training
3F.6 Cardiovascular and Respiratory Responses to Anaerobic Exercise
3F.7 Compatibility of Aerobic and Anaerobic Modes of Training
3F.8 Overtraining
3F.9 Detraining
3F.10 Adaptations to Aerobic Endurance Training Programs
3F.11 Acute Responses to Aerobic Exercise
3F.12 Chronic Adaptations to Aerobic Exercise
3F.13 Adaptations to Aerobic Endurance Training
3F.14 External and Individual Factors Influencing Adaptations to Aerobic Endurance Training
3F.15 Overtraining: Definition, Prevalence, Diagnosis, and Potential Markers
3F.16 Age- and Sex-Related Differences and Their Implications for Resistance Exercise
3F.17 Children
3F.18 Female Athletes
3F.19 Older Adults
3F.20 Rehabilitation and Reconditioning
3F.21 Types of Injury
3F.22 Tissue Healing
3F.23 Rehabilitation and Reconditioning Strategies
3F.24 Program Design
3F.25 Reducing Risk of Injury and Reinjury

3G. Resistance Training and Conditioning (Practical/Laboratory)

3G.1 Warm-Up and Flexibility Training
3G.2 Warm-Up
3G.3 Flexibility
3G.4 Types of Stretching
3G.5 Static Stretching Techniques

3G.6 Dynamic Stretching Techniques
3G.7 Exercise Technique for Free-Weight and Machine Training
3G.8 Fundamentals of Exercise Technique
3G.9 Spotting Free-Weight Exercises
3G.10 Resistance Training Exercises
3G.11 Olympic-style Lifting Techniques / Progressions and Regressions
3G.12 Exercise Technique for Alternative Modes and Nontraditional Implement Training
3G.13 Body-Weight Training Methods
3G.14 Core Stability and Balance Training Methods
3G.15 Variable-Resistance Training Methods
3G.16 Nontraditional Implement Training Methods
3G.17 Unilateral Training
3G.18 Alternative Modes and Nontraditional Exercises

3H. Exercise Technique/Exercise Prescription w/ Emphasis in Anaerobic Exercise

3H.1 Principles of Test Selection and Administration
3H.2 Reasons for Testing
3H.3 Testing Terminology
3H.4 Evaluation of Test Quality
3H.5 Test Selection
3H.6 Test Administration
3H.7 Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation of Selected Tests
3H.8 Measuring Parameters of Athletic Performance
3H.9 Selected Test Protocols and Scoring Data
3H.10 Statistical Evaluation of Test Data

3I. Program Design as Related to Strength and Conditioning

3I.1 Program Design for Resistance Training
3I.2 Principles of Anaerobic Exercise Prescription
3I.3 Step 1: Needs Analysis
3I.4 Step 2: Exercise Selection
3I.5 Step 3: Training Frequency
3I.6 Step 4: Exercise Order
3I.7 Step 5: Training Load and Repetitions
3I.8 Step 6: Volume
3I.9 Step 7: Rest Periods
3I.10 Program Design and Technique for Plyometric Training
3I.11 Plyometric Mechanics and Physiology
3I.12 Design of Plyometric Training Programs
3I.13 Age Considerations

3I.14 Plyometrics and Other Forms of Exercise
3I.15 Safety Considerations
3I.16 Plyometric Drills
3I.17 Program Design and Technique for Speed and Agility Training
3I.18 Speed and Agility Mechanics
3I.19 Neurophysiological Basis for Speed
3I.20 Running Speed
3I.21 Agility Performance and Change-of-Direction Ability
3I.22 Methods of Developing Speed
3I.23 Methods of Developing Agility
3I.24 Program Design
3I.25 Speed Development Strategies
3I.26 Agility Development Strategies
3I.27 Speed and Agility Drills
3I.28 Program Design and Technique for Aerobic Endurance Training
3I.29 Factors Related to Aerobic Endurance Performance
3I.30 Designing an Aerobic Endurance Program
3I.31 Types of Aerobic Endurance Training Programs
3I.32 Application of Program Design to Training Seasons
3I.33 Special Issues Related to Aerobic Endurance Training
3I.34 Aerobic Endurance Training Exercises
3I.35 Periodization
3I.36 Central Concepts Related to Periodization
3I.37 Periodization Hierarchy
3I.38 Periodization Periods
3I.39 Applying Sport Seasons to the Periodization Periods
3I.40 Undulating Versus Linear Periodization Models
3I.41 Example of an Annual Training Plan

3J. Program Organization, Administration, and Oversight

3J.1 Facility Design, Layout, and Organization
3J.2 General Aspects of New Facility Design
3J.3 Existing Strength and Conditioning Facilities
3J.4 Assessing Athletic Program Needs
3J.5 Designing the Strength and Conditioning Facility
3J.6 Arranging Equipment in the Strength and Conditioning Facility
3J.7 Maintaining and Cleaning Surfaces and Equipment
3J.8 Facility Policies, Procedures, and Legal Issues
3J.9 Mission Statement and Program Goals
3J.10 Legal and Ethical Issues

3J.11 Staff Policies and Activities
3J.12 Facility Administration
3J.13 Emergency Planning and Response

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Curriculum Map demonstrating inclusion of content in the program; demonstrate mastery of core competencies listed in Section 3 under "CURRICULUM" and provide a description of how the expected outcomes were met; examples of learning experiences/objectives and documentation including course syllabi, sample exams, final exams, and practical/lab experiences.

3K. Strength and Conditioning Internship

3K.1 The internship experience must provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate and be evaluated on the core competencies outlined in the didactic content areas listed in sections 3A through 3J under "CURRICULUM". The internship must follow a logical sequence in the curriculum, allowing the student to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities, learned through didactic and laboratory classes. Additionally, the internship is an opportunity for students to demonstrate professional and ethical standards within the field of strength and conditioning. The internship must provide a minimum of 300 hours of contact time including a minimum of two varied populations and two different sites (minimum of 150 hours at each). Internship should be done towards the end of the curriculum within the final year of study.

3K.2 Specifically, the internship experience must minimally include the following key areas:

(a) Warm-up; flexibility training; exercise technique; spotting; Olympic-style lifting/progressions/regressions; test selection and administration; program design; speed/agility/plyometric training; anaerobic and aerobic program design; periodization.

3K.3 The Internship Site Supervisor must receive planned and ongoing education from the program designed to promote a constructive learning environment.

3K.4 There must be an memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other document signed by both the internship site and the institution recognizing the student's presence at the site and giving permission for the student to participate in the internship experience actively.

3K.5 Ensure the health and safety of the student at the internship site.

3K.6 Internship must be included in the curriculum for credit comparable to other internship courses in the unit.

3K.7 Paid internships are permitted provided they meet all the requirements as described in this section.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Demonstrate mastery of core competencies listed in Section 3 under "CURRICULUM" and provide a description of how the expected outcomes were met; a log of internship hours must be provided by each student; examples of learning experiences/objectives and documentation including evaluations from Internship Site Supervisor.

RESOURCES

4A. Students

4A.1 The enrolled student body is consistent with the mission and goals of the program, the profession's need for qualified, competent practitioners, and the societal need for diversity among strength and conditioning coaches.

4B. Student Services

4B.1 The program must demonstrate that counseling, academic, disability, and financial aid services are available to students consistent with other programs on campus.

4C. Support Staff

4C.1 The program has, or has access to, administrative, secretarial, and technical support staff to meet its professional education, scholarship, and service goals and expected program outcomes.

4D. Financial Support

4D.1 The program must receive adequate, equitable, and annually available resources necessary to meet the program's size, stated mission, goals, and expected program outcomes, and to support the academic integrity and continuing viability of the program.

4E. Academic Resources

4E.1 The institutional library system and/or associated learning resources are adequate to support the educational and scholarship goals of the program, including both program faculty and student activities.

4F. Facilities

4F.1 The program has, or has ensured access to, classroom and laboratory/training space of sufficient quality and quantity to carry out program goals. The physical environment is supportive of effective teaching and learning processes.

4F.2 The program has offices and other space of sufficient quantity and quality for core and associated faculty to carry out their teaching, advisement, and service activities efficiently and effectively.

4G. Equipment, Technology and Materials

4G.1 The program has, or has ensured use of, equipment, technology, and materials necessary to meet the curricular goals and expected student outcomes. The program

is responsible for ensuring that equipment and materials are typical of those used in contemporary strength and conditioning practice, are sufficient in number, and are available when needed. Specific to space utilization, programs need to demonstrate priority utilization for scheduling of laboratory, classroom, and demonstration spaces.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):
Income and expense data; adequacy of the budget and services to meet the needs of the program, to include supplies, equipment purchase, repair, and replacement; describe the process used to determine short- and long-term budgetary needs that are tied to the goals and expected outcomes of the program.

POLICIES

5A. Secondary admittance to the program is required. These admission standards should exceed the minimum requirements for admission to the university. The program must not admit students in their freshman year.

5B. Prospective and enrolled students are provided with relevant information about the institution and program that may affect them, including, but not limited to: catalogs; academic calendars; grading policies; financial aid; the program's accreditation status; the process to register a complaint with the accrediting agency; student grievances; program/student outcome information; tuition cost; program fees; withdrawal/refund; remediation; retention; and other pertinent information. Materials related to the institution and program are accurate, comprehensive, current, and provided to students in a timely manner.

5D. Program policies, procedures, and practices related to student recruitment, admission, and internship placement are based on appropriate and equitable criteria and applicable law, and ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity. This criterion does not preclude a program's right to act affirmatively for protected classes.

5E. Policies, procedures, and practices that affect the rights, responsibilities, safety, privacy, and dignity of students are written, disseminated, and applied equitably.

5F. Policies, procedures, and practices exist for handling complaints that fall outside of the realm of due process, such as complaints from internship sites, employers of graduates, and the public. Records of complaints about the program, including the nature of the complaint and the disposition of the complaint, are maintained by the program.

5F. Policies, procedures, and practices provide for compliance with accreditation standards, including:

5F.1 Timely submission of required fees and documentation, including reports of graduation rates, employment rates, and performance on CSCS exams.

5F.2 Timely notification of expected or unexpected substantive change(s) within the program and of any change in institutional accreditation status or legal authority to provide post-secondary education.

5G. At the time of acceptance to the program, the university will articulate to potential students the policies that are in place in the event that accreditation is withheld or withdrawn.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):

Explanation of how students gain entry into the program, including specific admission standards; explanation of how complaints are handled/processed; describe how records of complaints are, or would be, maintained; explain how students are provided with, or can access, information relating to program policies, procedures, and practices; appropriate pages of student handbook and/or university catalog/website.

OUTCOMES

6A. There is an ongoing, formal program assessment process that determines the extent to which the program meets its stated mission. The assessment process:

6A.1 Uses information from professional standards and guidelines and institutional mission and policies.

6A.2 Uses data related to program mission, goals, and expected program outcomes, program policies and procedures, individual core faculty, Internship Site Supervisors, associated faculty, communication, resources, admissions criteria and prerequisites, curriculum plan, internship program, and expected student outcomes.

6A.3 Identifies program strengths and weaknesses.

6A.4 Includes considered decisions regarding need for change.

6A.5 Includes steps to achieve the changes, with anticipated dates of completion.

6B. Graduates of the program meet the expected student outcomes of the program, including those related to the program's unique mission.

6C. Graduates of the program meet the programming needs of athletes/clients and society through ethical behavior, continued competence, and advocacy for the profession.

6D. First time pass rates for the CSCS exam, based on a 3-year aggregate, must minimally be 75%.

6E. Employment rates are consistent with the program's mission, goals, and expected student outcomes.

6F. Programs must publicly display (website) student enrollment, graduation, retention rate, CSCS pass rate, and graduate employment rate.

Evidence of Compliance (provide the following):

Evidence of meeting professional standards and guidelines and institutional mission and policies; demonstrate strengths and weaknesses and how those were or will be addressed in the curriculum; describe any changes that will occur over the next 3 to 5 years as a result of assessment; an assessment of how the program is meeting the student outcomes; 3-year aggregate first time pass rates; 12-month employment rates.