

WHAT ARE THE COMPETENCIES OF A QUALIFIED STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROFESSIONAL?

The strength and conditioning profession involves combined competencies for the application of sport/exercise science, administration, management, teaching, and coaching. Its professionals must also comply with various laws and regulations while responding to instances of potential injury, and related claims and suits. This creates remarkable challenges, and requires substantial experience, expertise, and other resources to effectively address them, especially in multi-sport (e.g., collegiate and scholastic) settings.

Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialists[®] (CSCS[®]) are professionals who apply scientific knowledge to train athletes for the primary goal of improving athletic performance. They conduct sport-specific testing sessions, design and implement safe and effective strength training and conditioning programs and provide guidance regarding nutrition and injury prevention. Recognizing that their area of expertise is separate and distinct, CSCS[®] consult with and refer athletes to other professionals when appropriate.

Areas of Proficiency Covered by the CSCS[®]

The responsibilities and professional scope of practice for strength and conditioning professionals can be subdivided into two domains: “Scientific Foundations” and “Practical/Applied”¹

Scientific Foundations	Practical/Applied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise Science (Anatomy, Exercise Physiology, Biomechanics, etc) • Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Design • Exercise Technique • Organization & Administration • Testing & Evaluation

About the CSCS[®] Exam

The CSCS[®] certification exam program was initiated in 1985 to identify individuals who possess the knowledge and skills to design and implement safe and effective strength and conditioning programs. This certification program encourages a higher level of competence among practitioners, which in turn, raises the quality of strength training and conditioning programs provided to athletes by those who are CSCS[®]-certified.

Competencies assessed in the four-hour CSCS[®] examination were determined via a national task analysis conducted by an independent professional examination service. Every step in the process leading to the development of valid certification exams met the NCCA’s stringent guidelines. Pass/fail rates and reliability statistics are published annually.

Subject Matter Experts developing the CSCS[®] certification exam include renowned practitioners, researchers, educators, and psychometricians. While there are many certification programs associated with physical training, the CSCS[®] certification examination program was the first specifically designed to assess the competencies of those who strength train and condition athletes¹.

The CSCS[®] exam was the first certification in strength and conditioning to be accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and has been accredited since 1993. NCCA accreditation in the fitness industry is the widely-accepted and recognized accreditation standard.

¹National Strength and Conditioning Association. *Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines*. Colorado Springs, CO: National Strength and Conditioning Association, 2009.