



Bridging the gap
between sport science and practical application.

ASCA Scope of Practice

www.strengthandconditioning.org



Scope of Practice Statement (SOP)

“A strength and conditioning coach in Australia is an accredited Australian Strength and Conditioning Association coach who develops the physical capabilities of competitive athlete populations.”

Education and Training Requirements

Accreditation as a Strength and Conditioning Coach is achieved through a combination of coursework and specific training and competencies. The National Coach Accreditation Scheme which is administered by the Australian Sports Commission endorsed course programs offered by the Australian Strength and Conditioning Association (ASCA) are the foundation of the education pathway, and include Levels 1-3. Each level of accreditation involves training requirements in areas of coaching competence, foundation scientific knowledge, and relevant coaching experience.

- Level 1** Community/Club Level Strength and Conditioning Coach
- Level 2** State/National Level Strength and Conditioning Coach
- Level 3** Elite/International Level strength and Conditioning Coach

University level qualifications are not a requirement to be an accredited ASCA coach. However most jobs in the profession require an undergraduate degree in Human Movement or Sport Science, and the majority of coaches with Level 2 and Level 3 qualification have undergraduate, Masters, or PhD level qualifications. As such a large portion of ASCA coaches possess an undergraduate degree, master’s degree, or PhD.

Although sometimes confused, fitness-training credentials (e.g. Certificate IV in Fitness) are not a substitute for university level qualifications or ASCA coaching credentials. As such, fitness training for the general population is not in the SOP of strength and conditioning coaches. In turn, physical preparation of athletic populations in Australia is not in the SOP of individuals who are not credentialed by the ASCA (e.g. Personal Trainers) through the National Coach Accreditation Scheme. Importantly, to refer to oneself as a ‘Strength and Conditioning Coach’ in Australia, the individual must be credentialed in strength and conditioning, not personal fitness training. Conversely, to refer to oneself as a ‘Personal Fitness Trainer’ or ‘Personal Trainer’, one must be credentialed in Personal Fitness Training through a recognized pathway (i.e. Certificate IV).

Industry Recognized Coach - The ASCA Professional Coaching Scheme

The ASCA Professional Coaching Scheme is the industry’s recognized coach program. There is a need for the ASCA Professional Coaching Scheme, as ASCA accreditation (through the Australian Sports Commission requirements) recognizes coursework and competencies. The ASCA Professional Scheme acknowledge specific working experience, demonstrable successful achievements within the profession, mentee and mentorship participation, identified professional skill sets and requires training and declarations in regard to anti-corruption and anti-doping.

As such, the ASCA Professional Coaching Scheme serves as the Industry’s coaching quality assurance program. Most Australian employers require Strength and Conditioning staff to be a member of the scheme as part of best-practice models. The following four levels of recognition and their requirements for inclusion are in the table below.



INTERN (ASCA PSI LEVEL)

- Accredited ASCA Level 1 Coach and have attended and be completing the ASCA Level 2 Coach Accreditation
- Completed 100 hours of Practical S&C coaching within a sporting club environment, athlete performance training centre or High School program.
- Physically taken a program through a 6 month preparation
- Provide a 6 month training program for a given sport/individual
- Demonstrated ability to teach core lifts (i.e. Level 2 Practical Assessment Criteria signed by the assessor in course)
- Mentored by an ASCA Professional Level Coach or above.

PROFESSIONAL (ASCA PSP LEVEL)

- Must hold a current ASCA Level 2 Coach Accreditation
- Completed a minimum of 2 years full time or equivalent hours (3,600) as an S&C coach within a sporting club environment, athlete performance training centre or High School program.
- Provide evidence of ongoing competencies in flexibility conditioning, core lifts, speed and recovery (e.g. workshops/courses/seminars)
- Mentor an ASCA Intern Coach
- Mentored by an ASCA Elite Level Coach.

ELITE (ASCA PSE LEVEL)

- Completed the ASCA level 2 S&C Coaching Course
- Completed a minimum of 4 years full time or equivalent (7,200) in a High Performance S&C Program (e.g. working with professional athletes who derive their income from sport or compete at a National or International Level) e.g. AFL, NRL, AIS Olympic Sports, Super Rugby, Professional Teams or Athletes
- Mentor an ASCA Professional or Intern Level Coach
- Mentored by an ASCA Master Coach.

MASTER (ASCA PSM LEVEL)

- Accredited ASCA Level 3 Coach
- Completed a minimum of 8 years full time in a High Performance S&C Program (e.g. working with professional athletes who derive their income from sport or compete at a National or International Level) e.g. AFL, NRL, AIS Olympic Sports, Super Rugby, Professional Teams or Athletes
- Evidence provided in relation to education/mentoring/leadership abilities in S&C
- Coached multiple medal/potential elite athletes to highest competition level. (e.g. Olympic/Commonwealth Games, World Championships and/or Professional Teams) across different sports
- Significant contribution to S&C field in a practical, educational and structural setting
- Delivered a major presentation on any S&C topic at the ASCA National Conference
- Provide evidence of ongoing competencies in the areas of flexibility, conditioning, core lifts, speed and recovery
- Mentor an ASCA Elite Level Coach.

In addition all Professional Coach Association Members must:

- a) Be current members of the ASCA
- b) Be current accredited coach with the ASCA
- c) Sign and return the ASCA Professional Coaching Scheme Consent Form
- d) Provide evidence they have completed and passed ASADA's Level 1 or Level 2 Anti-Doping Course
<http://elearning.asada.gov.au>
- e) Completed the National Integrity of Sport Unit "Keep Australian Sport Honest" e-Learning Module
<http://elearning.sport.gov.au/>



Strength and Conditioning Coaches Do:

- Work with athletic populations.
- Work with a variety of ages from youth to veterans in accordance with ASCA position stands and guidelines.
- Screen athletes to identify potential risks for injury and limitations to performance.
- Identify and provide activity to address general wellness issues in athletes, such as posture and breathing.
- Design periodised and integrated athletic development programs in conjunction with a support team, head coach etc. to achieve individual and team goals using a range of methods: resistance training, conditioning / energy systems training, speed and agility drills (including basic technical running advice) and flexibility, mobility, warm up and warm down programs in a variety of settings.
- Have the knowledge to develop a range of movement, physical, strength and power testing protocols.
- Monitor and assess progress through physical testing, wellness monitoring and through the use of available athlete monitoring systems (e.g. Heart Rate and its variability, Global Positioning Systems, performance testing, etc.)
- Provide general information on healthy eating, eating to support training goals, basic supplement information. NB The S & C coach can only make generalized recommendations in line with ASADA and AIS published Guidelines on the efficacy and WADA legality of specific supplements.
- Provide general information on basic physiological recovery modalities.
- Have the ability and credentials to provide basic First Aid and CPR.
- Work in conjunction with Sports medicine staff and physiotherapists to design appropriate rehabilitation plans.
- Work in conjunction with Sport Coach's to develop and review Athlete Performance Plans and their roles and accountabilities within these plans.

S&C Coaches MUST:

- Refer to Nutrition specialists for more advanced and individualised information on dietary intervention.
- Refer to Sports medicine practitioners to diagnose and treat injuries and illnesses.

S&C Coaches DO NOT:

- Diagnose injury or illness.
- Prescribe medications.
- Treat injuries through manual therapy or manual corrective joint manipulation.
- Rehabilitate injury, or oversee (directly) the rehabilitation of injury.
- Provide diets or recommend specific supplements
- Work with the general population (e.g. Personal Fitness Training), or clients with health concerns including cardiac dysfunction, diabetes, or other conditions.



Extended Scope of Practice

Extended SOP refers to those individuals who have additional skill-sets, *obtained through specialist training*, in areas that complement their work as a strength and conditioning coach. Through this specific training and credentialing, the coach therefore has, in addition to their strength and conditioning SOP, additional activities that extend their SOP. Some areas that ASCA coach members may have additional credentialing and SOP include:

Credentialed Coach in another Australian Sports Commission Sport that complements and extends their S&C work and SOP (e.g. Gymnastics, Olympic weightlifting, Athletics).

Soft-tissue therapy (e.g. credentialed in sports massage training and/or specific myofascial techniques, etc.).

Physical Therapy (e.g. a credentialed physiotherapist, Chiropractor, Osteopath).

Specialized Nutrition Intervention (e.g. Accredited Sports Dietician, Certified Sports Nutritionist from International Society of Sports Nutrition).

Athletic Therapy/strapping techniques (e.g. Sports Medicine Australia credentialed in Athletic Therapy including strapping techniques).

Anthropometry Assessment (i.e. Credentialed by the International Society of Kinanthropometry).

Sport Science Assessments (e.g. trained through university or other education route to carry out blood-draws (phlebotomy), real-time ultrasound for muscle architecture assessments, assess blood lactate, physiological performance assessment (e.g. anaerobic and aerobic assessments in a laboratory environment), kinetic and kinematic assessments (3-D motion capture, force plate assessments, etc.)).

Exercise Physiologist (i.e. Exercise and Sport Science Australia credentialed Exercise Physiologist).

Personal Fitness Trainer (e.g. credentialed as a fitness professional with Certificate IV).