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Working contexts: the reality of being in the field.

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Abstract

The principles of sound professional practice will be discussed along with introducing an overview of the knowledge, attributes and skills required by effective practitioners. The author will explore key topics that underpin safe and effective professional practice. The early career practitioner will be exposed to issues around insurance, data protection, safeguarding and the personal responsibilities they take on in the field. The chapter will also offer some recommendations/advice regarding best practice when working in the field.

Word Count: 4986

22 **Working contexts: the reality of being in the field.**

23

24 Brief Overview

25 Sport and exercise science is a multidisciplinary field that spans both performance and

26 health contexts. In this chapter working '*in the field*' is taken to mean working in an

27 applied practice setting offering support and interventions. The specifics of working in

28 the field vary depending on the role, discipline, and type of working arrangement.

29 Understanding the working context and the potential nuances are central to maintaining

30 safe and effective professional practice. This chapter will start by outlining the potential

31 working contexts within the field (see Figure 1), followed by a wider discussion on

32 employment issues such as salaries, philosophies, and job descriptions. The following

33 sections will move onto the practicalities of working in the field covering logistics and

34 admin-based issues (e.g., insurance, policies) and supervision. The last section will then

35 focus on the overlapping considerations such as the development of soft skills/craft

36 knowledge, working with technology and finally working as part of a multidisciplinary

37 team (MDT).

38

39 Working contexts

40 This section is designed to outline the main working contexts and types of roles

41 available. The intention is to create an opportunity for the reader to consider the

42 contexts in light of working practice and training and professional development needs.
43 The number of positions available, the scope and the timeframes are often dependent
44 on funding and the specific needs of the employer (Dwyer et al., 2019). This means the
45 number of jobs and the type of jobs vary. This approach can offer flexibility to evolve as
46 new positions become available based on current need. For example, positions have
47 become available in relation to understanding the female athlete, cardiac health in
48 athletes, or exploring obesity and physical inactivity in children.

49 Notably, the majority of funding in sport and exercise settings is allocated
50 towards health and physical activity rather than elite performance (Beneke, 2013). This
51 may be understood within the context of the wider government agenda which seeks to
52 promote physical activity to all age ranges and populations e.g. 'Physical activity:
53 Applying All Our Health' (NHS, 2022). The increased drive to promote physical activity as
54 both a preventative and rehabilitative measure in children, older people, individuals with
55 physical and/or mental illness as well as to disabled populations broadens the potential
56 for employment within this sector. The demand for support within health and physical
57 activity is therefore wider reaching than ever before.

58 It could also be argued that jobs within elite/performance sport are becoming
59 increasingly more varied and wide-reaching through increased access to competitive
60 sport environments through the development of para-sport opportunities, age-group
61 academy structures, Masters tournaments and endurance events. For example, in

62 professional team sport clubs or a national representative context it is now
63 commonplace for sports to have upwards of ~15 sport science support staff
64 (Eisenmann, 2017), with most clubs including having additional support for the women's
65 and men's first teams and academies. Data from the English Institute of Sport shows
66 that it employs more than 350 people to provide direct delivery services across 40
67 Olympic and Paralympic sports (Meckbach et al., 2022). Such support roles typically
68 cover the breadth of sports science (e.g. physiology, biomechanics, nutrition and
69 psychology, strength and conditioning, data scientist, sport psychologist, performance
70 analysis, performance lifestyle and medical services). These types of positions remain
71 highly competitive, as there are more aspiring practitioners than the number of
72 positions available.

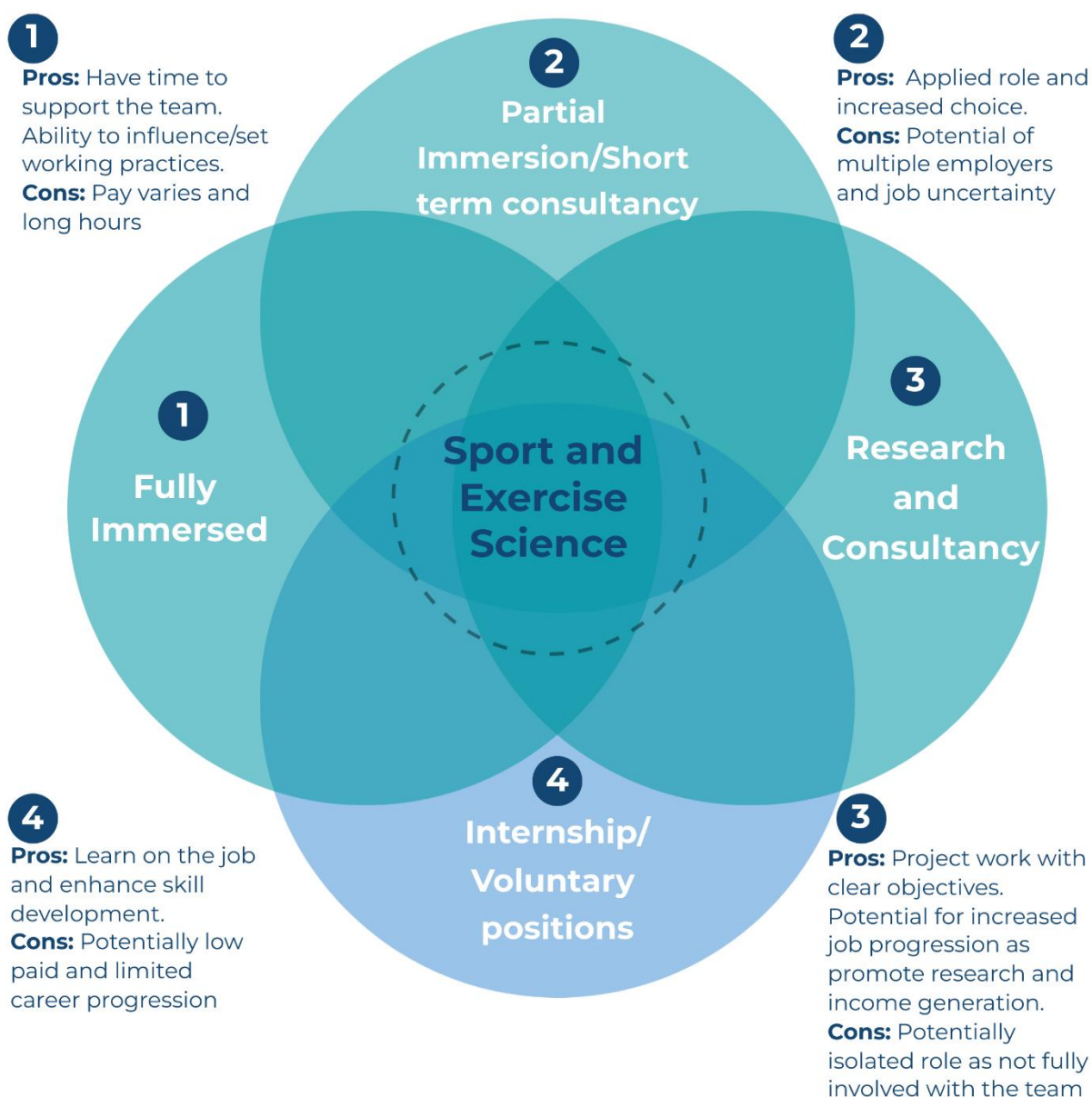
73 The evolving and wide-ranging aspects of sports science provision means it is
74 beyond the scope of this chapter to cover all applied working contexts in depth.
75 However, broadly speaking the contexts can be split into four main categories, which do
76 and can overlap. These will be outlined below in Figure 1 and the subsequent section.

77 Figure 1. Illustrative model of the four working contexts

Working Contexts

Illustrative model of the four main categories

People can combine applied roles within a sporting organisation with research or opt to work in one of the context outlined below. The premise is that an internship can lead to a role in one of the three other working contexts (although this is not always the case).



79 1. *Fully Immersed*

80 The first category is 'fully immersed' with the practitioner undertaking full time paid
81 work (often including travel) as part of a wider multidisciplinary team (typically only
82 working in one, maximum two sports/exercise settings at the same time) within a sport
83 or exercise context (see Chapter 10). In the context of sport, an example of such a role
84 might be working with a professional club or within the national setup of a governing
85 body or sports council/institute. This is often the most visible role that people aspire to
86 do, as the glamour and the prestige of working at major sporting events can be
87 considered the pinnacle (Malone, 2017). Practitioners in these types of applied roles,
88 typically have limited years of experience, highlighting the potential wider issue of
89 longevity of these applied roles in sports science (Dwyer et al., 2019). In the context of
90 exercise this could be a clinical physiologist working in a hospital full time (see Chapter
91 12).

92

93 2. *Partial immersion or short-term consultancy*

94 The second category, 'partial immersion' or 'short-term consultancy' can involve working
95 with a team or in a clinic but on a limited number of days contract. The work may be
96 with multiple sports/populations/or in several places, either working for yourself or as
97 part of an organisation. In sport this could be a sport physiologist working for a team for

98 18 hours per week. In exercise this could be someone working in an exercise referral unit
99 in a community setting on an 18-hour contract per week.

100

101 *Overlap and Considerations for Fully Immersed /Partial Immersion.*

102 The realities of these applied roles (fully immersed or partial immersion) in sport,
103 typically includes long working hours (Dwyer et al., 2019), remote working with
104 extended periods away from family and friends (Malone, 2017), feelings of isolation (Hill
105 et al., 2021), job/financial instability (Arnold et al., 2019; Arnold et al., 2017; Gilmore et
106 al., 2018), limited ability to progress or for career development (Arnold et al., 2017;
107 Cropley et al., 2016; Wagstaff, 2017; York et al., 2014) and the potential for low pay
108 (Arnold et al., 2017; Pacey, 2022)

109 There is also a wider concern surrounding the working environment due to acute
110 peaks in workload (Hill et al., 2021) which could mean that practitioners are working
111 longer hours and continual days without rest and thus are outside of legal working
112 regulations (Arnold et al., 2019). Furthermore, researchers have revealed practitioners
113 working in high performance sport, experience a high degree of stress related to high
114 workload, challenging interpersonal relationships, environment/organisational stressors,
115 physical resources (concerning the quality and accessibility of facilities, equipment,
116 technology and data safety and moral/ethical dilemmas (Arnold et al., 2017; Kerai et al.,
117 2019). Worryingly, research has found that experiencing such stressors has a negative

118 impact on the practitioners' health and wellbeing and personal relationships (Arnold et
119 al., 2017; Hill et al., 2021). There are also concerns related to the ability to adhere to
120 effective working practice and ethical codes due to contractual constraints impacting on
121 a practitioner's ability to maintain confidentiality (Waddington et al., 2019) and the
122 potential to be exposed to poor coaching practice (Stirling et al., 2011). For example,
123 published accounts document how poor practice is legitimised in sport (Kerr et al.,
124 2019), and more concerning, actively promoted, based on the assumption these types of
125 practice enhance the likelihood of increased performance (Gervis et al., 2016). For
126 example, Cruickshank & Collins (2015) highlight how leaders in elite sport have
127 disclosed intentionally engaging in socially undesirable behaviours (often referred to as
128 the dark side) in specific scenarios in their pursuit of performance outcomes and as part
129 of their leadership aims of delivering change. In these cases, supervision, social support,
130 organisational culture and education act as protective factors (Hill et al., 2021).

131 We have to be clear that there is an ethical obligation to promote safe practice
132 and ensure the practitioner does not become an enabler of poor practice. However, we
133 do need to consider the challenges within the environment. For example, the process of
134 securing one of these roles (fully immersed or partial immersion) in performance sport
135 can be related to a prior relationship with a senior member of staff (Pacey, 2022).
136 Evidence from football indicated most staff got their current role without applying
137 through a publicly available job advert (Pacey, 2022). These recruitment practices

138 increase the likelihood that someone may not want to go against the status quo in the
139 club especially if they have a working relationship with the staff member as they might
140 be worried about securing any future employment, compounded by the
141 aforementioned job insecurities. It also increases the likelihood of unqualified or
142 insufficiently experienced personnel securing jobs that they are not suited to. The ideal
143 scenario is that recruitment follows a formal application process that adheres to
144 equality, diversity and inclusion guidelines and reflects transparent and fair practices.
145 Beyond recruitment, to ensure practitioner and client welfare, it is important that
146 employment practice is continually reviewed by independent organisations.

147

148 3. *Research and Consultancy*

149 The third category of working in the field is through the context of providing
150 commissioned or 'bought-out' research and consultancy services from the relative
151 security of having a full-time post elsewhere, typically within the university sector. This
152 approach arguably offers increased job security, increased rates of progression and
153 potentially greater financial return as an individual can build their experience through
154 undertaking additional applied work alongside, or as part of, their main job. In this
155 working context, the practitioner seems to be protected from some of the job
156 insecurities highlighted above in the fully/partial immersed roles, as they maybe already
157 fully employed by a university, therefore already having a permanent contract and

158 pension. The main employer, the university, benefits as the experiences of the staff
159 member can potentially be used to inform teaching and produce high quality research
160 outputs as well as income generation thus enhancing the status of the university as a
161 result of a member of their staff working at a high level. The sport/exercise setting
162 benefits as they are getting a highly qualified member of staff who can help them to
163 achieve their goals and meet their needs.

164 In addition to consultancy roles, PhD studentships (with joint University and
165 Industry matched funding) are becoming an increasingly attractive option to answer
166 novel research questions and offer a way to bolster the support resources and
167 continually create evidenced based practice (McCall et al., 2016). Indeed, the origins of
168 sport science support to national teams lie within a 1990s project in which Sport Science
169 Support Officers were part funded by partner universities and the sports council at the
170 time to both provide support services and conduct PhD level research in the selected
171 sport (Burwitz et al., 1994). The benefits of accessing 'off-field brains' (Jones et al., 2019)
172 mean that both the practitioners and applied researchers can work collaboratively to
173 develop evidence-based practice and overcome the apparent dichotomy of differences
174 in working practice and time scales to deliver impact (Coutts, 2016). Central to this
175 approach is the development of a research-practitioner role to meet the demand of
176 interpreting and integrating the research within the practice setting effectively, allowing
177 for adequate provision to spend appropriate time in both environments (Coutts, 2016).

178 This approach addresses barriers such as 'lack of funding and time to dedicate to
179 research' and in turn has the potential to increase 'staff buy in' and 'manager buy in'
180 (Fullagar et al., 2019). Furthermore, Bartlett and Drust (2021) highlight within their
181 framework the importance of the practitioner to have skills and knowledge in
182 facilitation, understanding your stakeholders, knowledge of your own personal/
183 professional philosophy as well as knowledge about the specific evidence base.

184

185 4. Internship/Voluntary Positions

186 Lastly, sport and exercise scientists may take on paid or unpaid internships/voluntary
187 positions. These positions are often seen as a steppingstone to get some experience in
188 applied work (York et al., 2014) for early career practitioners. An internship is designed
189 as a way of gaining career-specific experience to 'learn on the job' (Malone, 2017), under
190 the guidance of an appropriately qualified and experienced practitioner (Stewart et al.,
191 2016). As well as technical skills, internships have been found to develop "soft skills,"
192 such as communication, interpersonal, awareness of work culture, and self-confidence
193 (Sleap & Reed, 2006). The notion of getting 'hands-on real-world experience' to prepare
194 practitioners for the complexities and the realities of the role is considered to be
195 essential in their development (Malone, 2017). Furthermore, the internship process
196 seems to be mutually beneficial for the employers as evidence suggests within the

197 discipline of strength and conditioning, for example, there is a 44% conversion rate from
198 internship/placements to a full-time paid role (Stewart et al., 2016).

199 One of the main challenges with internships is to make sure everyone has the
200 opportunity to access internships and develop employability. Often there are many
201 unintended consequences for the practitioner and the discipline as a whole if
202 internships are unpaid. To address the challenges and to raise the standards of
203 employment within internships, the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences
204 (BASES) published a position stand on graduate internships (BASES, 2013) to
205 acknowledge the mutual benefits for students and employers and to provide good
206 practice recommendations.

207 Currently, it could be argued that more needs to be done to meet these good
208 practice recommendations, especially given more graduates are training in sport
209 science. This has created a supply and demand issue; high popularity and limited
210 positions (Malone, 2017) within the training pathway of early career practitioners. The
211 need to gain experience in limited roles, potentially creates a situation whereby some
212 organisations offer unpaid internships because they can access trainees/students in
213 need of experience in preference to paying full time employees. The on-going provision
214 of these types of internships and the need to create paid roles within the training
215 pathways for early career practitioners is a wider issue for universities, professional
216 bodies (e.g., BASES) and employers. To address these factors, there is a need to continue

217 to collaborate and work in partnership to make sure there are clear, sustainable,
218 accessible training pathways into applied sport and exercise science that meet the needs
219 of the practitioner, the employer and the university.

220 The ideal internship model is one where the internship can be incorporated
221 within the educational or training pathway/programmes. By embedding the internship
222 within the educational/training pathways, competencies developed on the internship
223 can be pre-agreed linked to the skill/training of the intern their need of training
224 development. Any potential internship can be approved, and risk assessed in advance by
225 qualified staff at the university/training pathway. The development of the intern can be
226 linked specifically to the hours relating to the internship so paced accordingly and the
227 intern can still access university staff, their peer network, supervisors (*in situ* and at
228 university/training pathway) and access the funding and student support if required
229 whilst on their internship.

230

231 **Self-reflection task 1 for the reader: Preparing to go into the field**

- 232 • Reflect on what expectations you have when working in the field
233 • Reflect on the benefits of working in the field
234 • Reflect on which categories of employment you think would suit you best at this
235 point in time. Also consider what you might aspire to or how this might change
236 over time.

237

238

239

240 Employment issues -salaries, philosophies, and job description

241 **Salaries.** It is difficult to report on salaries within the different working contexts as
242 salaries are not often stated on the job descriptions (Vernau et al., 2021), especially
243 when considering role in high performance sport (Pacey, 2022). The skills outlined on
244 the job descriptions, combined with the competitive nature of securing an applied role
245 often means graduates complete advanced academic and professional qualifications
246 (Bernal-García et al., 2018; Sleaf & Reed, 2006) in pursuit of paid employment.

247 To shed a light on salaries, Pacey, (2022) conducted a survey with 138
248 practitioners working full time in British senior football. 71% of respondents were 30
249 years of age or younger and 62% had five or less years' experience. The most senior role
250 was "Head of", and salaries ranged from £16,000 to £208,000, (average reported salary
251 £35,000 pre-bonus with less than two thirds earning more than £30,000). The
252 information presented here on salaries is in line with the intention of Pacey (2022) to
253 help provide practitioners (future practitioners) information to aid their decision making
254 about working (or not) in the field. Although the average pay is lower than a typical
255 graduate salary, it is worth noting that there is the potential to earn a high wage,
256 depending on the setting. In support of this, particularly in research and consultancy
257 and in fully immersed roles, the employers' perception of the practitioner's value and
258 their impact can lead to enhanced pay (Stevens et al., 2021).

259

260 **Philosophies.** Another consideration, especially against the backdrop of the potential of
261 limited paid roles, job insecurities, varying salaries and environment/interpersonal
262 stressors, is the importance of matching your philosophy with the employer's
263 philosophy (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009; Wagstaff et al., 2015). It may be tempting to take
264 the first job that pays well due to the high costs of training when starting out, however,
265 it may be worth considering is the job a good match for you. For example, it can be
266 tricky to balance creating a performance environment that facilitates flourishing
267 (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009) or achieving performance expectations (e.g., medal targets)
268 whilst upholding duty of care. Although it is tricky, it is not impossible to achieve
269 performance and health goals. For example, Stellingwerff (2018) documents how body
270 composition can be periodised for performance whilst maintaining health throughout a
271 9-year international career in a female runner. We would encourage practitioners to
272 reflect on how they would know if a setting is a good match for them.

273

274 ***Job description/Scope of practice.*** When working in the field, practitioners need to be
275 aware of the differences in scope of practice relative to competencies, especially in
276 relation to the use of protected titles¹ to work ethically and maintain the
277 athlete's/clients' best interest. Vernau et al., (2021) reviewed 51 job descriptions (from
278 the UK (45%), North America (45%), Other (10%) for advertised Strength and

¹ Protected titles in the UK are given to professions which are regulated and protected by law and professionals must be registered to use them

279 Conditioning positions. The results revealed that only 29% of job descriptions asked for
280 a professional qualification (UKSCA ASCC, or close to completion) and 24% did not list
281 professional qualifications as essential. The academic qualification required was
282 predominantly at Bachelor level, with only 4% of job descriptions requiring a Masters
283 level qualification as essential and none listed a Doctorate. In terms of experience, the
284 majority of job specifications required only 1-2 years of experience. Taken together the
285 authors commented uncertainty around the ambiguity and lack of consistency across
286 job descriptions.

287 Perhaps more worryingly is that, for the level of responsibility of the roles, the
288 limited experience and lack of professional accreditation is not consistent with the
289 requirements for the same level of role within the other disciplines of sports science. The
290 authors did caution that due to competition the actual qualification and the experience
291 may be much higher than what is stated on the job description. Additionally, it could be
292 argued that strength and conditioning is a relatively young discipline (in comparison to
293 other sport science disciplines) and as it matures and evolves some of these ambiguities
294 and inconsistencies will be resolved.

295

296 *Logistics and administration-based issues - insurance, policies, and professional systems*

297 In relation to sound professional practice there are some logistical and administration-
298 based considerations relevant in all working contexts. Ideally, these need to be

299 established prior to working in that context or within the early stages. Examples include
300 negotiating and agreeing a contract (even if voluntary role), clearly outlining who is the
301 client and your role. Regardless of the working context you have a personal
302 responsibility to clearly communicate what work is within your scope of practice, relative
303 to your training and associated competencies and this should be reflected within your
304 roles and responsibilities and within the job plan/description/contract. Your roles and
305 responsibilities must also align with the professional standards set by your relevant
306 professional bodies (for more detail please see Chapter 2).

307 It is also important to set up procedures relative to confidentiality in practice;
308 sharing of data and establishing who owns the intellectual property of the data
309 (particularly linked to commercial enterprise and moving from one sport/setting to
310 another). You also need to explore/agree/establish a process of ongoing referral and be
311 aware/able to implement with staff in the organisation safeguarding policies, especially
312 when supporting children/minors, vulnerable adults and when traveling off site (for
313 more detail see below and Chapter 4, 11, 12, 14). It is also worth considering whether
314 you need professional indemnity insurance and insurance for your vehicle depending on
315 your role and position. Typically, within an 'employed' context much of the above will be
316 managed by the employer but those practitioners working in a sole-trader, consultant,
317 self-employed or own limited company capacity need to consider how these issues will

318 be addressed - do you, for example, as a self-employed consultant have a Safeguarding
319 Policy?

320

321 Working with supervision

322 The type and amount of supervision will vary depending on your role, training needs,
323 intervention goal and your scope of practice. Therefore, it is important to reflect on
324 which supervisor is best for your needs and also if you are in a position (post training) to
325 offer someone else supervision. It is also important to acknowledge that supervision or
326 mentoring maybe by a direct line manager and this may bring practical advantages in
327 terms of knowledge and skill base, there also maybe the unintended consequence of
328 fear to share concerns. Therefore, regular monitoring to ensure the supervisor and
329 supervisee relationship is working as intended is advised. Post training supervision is not
330 mandatory for all disciples of sports science. It must be noted those practitioners
331 registered with the Health Care Professions Council will be expected to received regular
332 supervision post training. There are several known barriers to supervision such as
333 significant time and financial barriers and ability to find a supervisor with relevant
334 expertise or time to be able to commit. It is recognised that many practitioners do seek
335 supervision or mentoring as well as engaging with self-reflection but learning to work
336 with a supervisor or mentor regularly is a skill, takes commitment and potentially
337 organisational recognition to gain the time or financial support to access supervision.

338 **Self-reflection task 2 for the reader: Working in the field promoting duty of care in**
339 **practice, Kavanagh et al. (2021) urge sport and exercise science practitioners to**
340 **reflect on these four questions**

- 341 • Do I know my responsibilities related to our reciprocal duty of care?
- 342 • Am I aware of the policies, procedures, resources, and support available to help
- 343 meet these responsibilities?
- 344 • Am I confident that I am fulfilling my duty of care for others?
- 345 • Are other people fulfilling their duty of care for me?

346

347 *Craft Knowledge*

348 It is beyond the scope of this chapter to focus on technical knowledge and skills due to
349 the specific needs of a wide range of roles across the field of sport and exercise science,
350 however, there is considerable overlap when it comes to craft knowledge (McFee, 1993).
351 Craft knowledge is gained from practical experience and the application of craft
352 knowledge in everyday practice is seen as a fundamental part of working in the field. For
353 example, Mujika (2017) found when interviewing sport scientists who had made a
354 significant contribution to medal-winning performances they reinforced the importance
355 of interpersonal craft skills. For example, key craft factors were: the ability to relate to
356 the coach and athlete, availability, helping a project without changing it, and readiness
357 for cooperation. Furthermore, when interviewing gatekeepers from four sports (both
358 team and individual) about their experiences of hiring sport psychologists, in addition to
359 technical skills, it was found that skills in being able to relate, want to work within and
360 understand their place within a multidisciplinary team and ability to develop a common
361 plan are sought after qualities (Woolway & Harwood, 2019). All those qualities are

362 trainable, however, they are influenced by the organisational culture and often
363 supported through supervision/mentorship.

364

365 Working with technology

366 When working in the field, having knowledge and skills in being able to use technology
367 and apply the interpretation of data from technology appropriately is often required.

368 Often practitioners feel a pressure to use the latest technology (Chambers et al., 2015)
369 to gain or continue to keep a competitive advantage or to deliver high quality services.

370 At times this may have negative consequences as a clear rationale for the use of
371 technology and understanding towards how the newly acquired data will improve
372 performance and decision making is often lacking (Gamble et al., 2020). A case example

373 is the use of the acute chronic workload ratio approach, to monitor training load

374 (Impellizzeri et al., 2020) as due diligence towards understanding the validity of the

375 metric was not successfully completed. Gamble et al. (2020) describes how tracking how

376 far and fast a player ran during a match changed the intended aim, with athletes

377 focusing on achieving technology metrics rather than focusing on performance goals,

378 therefore progress in the metric was achieved but it was unclear how it helped to

379 improve performance. Having a clear rationale is critical as athletes have also reported

380 that technology is an additional stressor due to the feeling of a surveillance culture, and

381 the knowledge that their performance is being measured (Williams & Manley, 2016).

382 Similarly, in an exercise context, individuals encouraged to undertake physical
383 activity for simple physical and mental fitness and wellbeing gains may feel that the
384 challenge to meet target numbers (distances, times, steps etc.) detracts from the
385 freedom of doing exercise. However, conversely some individuals may require the
386 motivation of having targets set and recorded by technology as an incentive to engage.
387 The challenge, therefore, is to incorporate technology and data to enhance decision-
388 making and motivation as part of the wider support goals without risking the distraction
389 that technology may play. When using technology, the practitioner has a responsibility
390 to ensure its validity and continue to work with the support team to translate the
391 information into meaningful actions (Nosek et al., 2021) thus enhancing practice and
392 guarding the welfare of the client.

393

394 **Self-reflection task 3 for the reader: Working in the field**

- 395 • Think about how what craft knowledge you have developed or could develop
396 Reflect on how you develop (or could develop) a working relationship with a
397 coach
398 • Think about an example of technology or theory and how you would explain this
399 to a coach/athlete/client/parent

400

401 *Working as part of a multidisciplinary team*

402 The ability to work as part of a MDT, is something that is often written on a job
403 description as an essential criterion as it is considered fundamental to offer holistic
404 support to clients within sport and exercise settings. In practice, working in this way can

405 have considerable challenges, as highlighted by research such as (Collins et al., 1993;
406 Collins et al., 1999). Rothwell et al. (2020) has highlighted that multidisciplinary is not
407 always indicative of team working, in fact, the authors note in practice it often refers to a
408 collective of individuals working in silos . As such, an interdisciplinary approach, defined
409 as an '*integration* of information from more than one subdiscipline of sports science'
410 (Burwitz et al., 1994) or a departmental approach (Rothwell et al., 2020) might be a
411 better approach to adopt. However, if the challenges can be overcome there is evidence
412 of how MDT working can enhance practice and lead to best practice, for example, using
413 the MDT in medicine or injury prevention (Tee et al., 2018).

414 It must be recognised that not all practitioners who are working in the field, work
415 as part of a multidisciplinary team. When assessing exercise referrals, or when working
416 with an athlete, practitioners are therefore strongly encouraged to reflect on whether
417 the support work is within their scope of competence and if they have an understanding
418 of the context of which the client operates in. For example, in Australia, McKean et al.
419 (2015) found the majority of registered exercise professional (not accredited practicing
420 dietitians) were working outside their scope of practice and did not have training or
421 experience to provide nutritional advice sought by the public. The authors
422 recommended a change to the context of education at the training level and continuous
423 professional development on scope of practice, including when and how to refer to
424 other professionals.

425 **Self-reflection task 4 for the reader: Working in the field**

- 426
- 427 • Reflect on how you would facilitate effective communication as a practitioner
 - 428 working independently with a client and as part of a team
 - 429 • Reflect on what you believe is best practice to support a client when working
 - 430 within a team.
 - 431 • Reflect on how you would refer a client on to another practitioner if their needs
 - 432 were outside your scope of practice and competencies.
- 433

434 Summary and Recommendations

435 In summary, the chapter has been designed as way to provide insight into the

436 knowledge, attributes and skills required by effective practitioners and underpin safe

437 and effective professional practice. The reality of being in the field, can only be ever truly

438 experienced by working in the field, but there is an ethical obligation to help prepare

439 practitioners as best we can by being transparent about some of the known

440 complexities of working in a dynamic, complex environment. It is hoped that by

441 reflecting on the context of working in the field, then this will also invoke a wider

442 discussion about:

- 443
- 444 • what knowledge, skills and attributes are required
 - 445 • organisational demands/stressors and how they can be explored to help
 - 446 maintain athlete/client welfare and practitioner wellbeing
 - 447 • what support is required (e.g., supervision/mentorship/professional body)
 - 448 to maintain effective working practices
 - 449 • how can we create a sport and exercise science discipline that is
 - sustainable over time

- 450 • how we can promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the field of
451 sport and exercise science

452 Moving forwards, we encourage the continuation of publishing case reports and
453 reflection articles to help gain a greater understanding of the realities of working in the
454 field. It is the aim to use this knowledge to assist the development of best practice and
455 evidence-based guidelines to promote and protect practitioner and client welfare.

456

457

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