

Unit D1: Applied Coaching Skills

Level: **3**

Unit type: **Internal**

Guided learning hours: **180**

You can click in this box to go to the introductory section for our delivery guide. This provides an overview of:

- **The BTEC National Sport (2019) qualification suite, including the four pathways and links to occupational standards**
- **Employer engagement**
- **Incorporating Blended Learning**
- **Our support offer**

Approaching the unit

There are many reasons why people will seek coaching within the sporting environment, from learning a new sport, to playing socially with friends, for personal challenge and achievement to achieving success in competition. It is critical therefore, that the coach is aware of the personal motivations of their performers and uses this intelligence to shape their coaching plans and programmes, to ensure that the coaching programme meets their needs.

The lead coach has overall responsibility for the safety and quality of the coaching session, as well as the direction of the overall coaching programme. This unit builds on the theories of coaching and leadership knowledge and practical skills development of the assistant coach in Unit C1 and focuses in on the roles and responsibilities of the lead coach.

The key feature of the lead coach is that to deliver an effective coaching programme, they must be able to assess the needs and motivations for each individual within the coaching group and be able to use this to plan individual sessions that meet these needs, as well as link the sessions together in a progressive coaching programme. The lead coach also needs to be able to deploy assistant coaches and monitor levels of progress across the session to make sure the session is on track to deliver the objectives.

The other key skill of the lead coach is to be able to reflect and review progress within coaching sessions and make adaptations within the session itself and in any future sessions to ensure the needs of the individuals in the group are met.

In order to deliver the unit, it is important that learners explore the underpinning knowledge around concepts such as needs assessment and programme planning, as well as having substantial exposure to the practical coaching environment, to build on their coaching delivery skills developed in Unit C1 and to adapt and refine them to meet the

requirements of performing the lead coach role.

It would again be advisable to source a variety of guest speakers with lead coach experiences from across a range of sports and from grass roots and performance sporting environments. These insights will provide a wider context to the learner, especially if these can be sourced from across a range of different sports, which can be compared with the learners' own experiences of coaching programmes to help shape the learners own coaching approaches and philosophy.

Delivering the learning aims

Learning aim A

The success of a coaching programme is fundamentally judged by whether the needs and aspirations of the sports performers within the coaching group have been met. Therefore, it is critical that the lead coach is able to determine these needs, motivations and expectations prior to the development of the coaching plan, so that the linked and progressive sessions that are developed are relevant to the performers in the sessions.

These needs and motivations can be extremely diverse, related to the performance level of the group, the type of sport, and the background of the performers themselves. Therefore, it is important to cover a wide range of scenarios within this learning aim, to provide learners with as broad a view as possible.

The learning aim will cover the type of data that the head coach may need to collect to enable the effective programme planning process along with ways that they might analyse and profile the data to provide the best chance of coaching success for the performers, all bound by the relevant legislation, rules and regulations linked to the usage of personal data.

There are a broad set of expectations of the head or lead coach that are detailed in the CIMSPA and UK Coaching standards related to safety, conduct and standards of behaviour. Within the learner group, individuals are likely to have experienced coaching environments across different sports, so it is advisable to draw out their own experiences to place in context against the expectations placed on head coaches and coaching teams. Coaches with a range of different experiences at different levels of performance, across different sports could also add significant value to this conversation, to bring to life examples from different sports.

Learning aim B

Learners should have developed some skills in planning a successful coaching session from the completion of Unit C1: Developing Coaching Skills, but as a head coach, the planning requirements are somewhat extended to cover the planning and development of effective coaching programmes. This essentially means that the head coach would need to be able to plan a series of linked and progressive coaching sessions that build the required skills and techniques related to the sport, whilst meeting the needs of the group.

The wider requirement of the head coach in this area of planning is to consider all development aspects that the performers might benefit from, including areas such as

nutrition, psychology leadership etc and build these into the delivery, along with opportunities to reflect and review progress.

A similar delivery approach to learning aim A may be successful here, with the learners sharing their own personal knowledge and experience of what works and what areas to avoid when planning coaching programmes, as well as tapping into the experience of guest speakers with head coach experience from a range of sports and performance levels.

Learning aim C

This learning aim should be delivered predominantly through practical activities where possible, that provide learners with the opportunity to further develop the skills developed in Unit C1. The focus of this learning aim is upon the specific skills required to be the head coach, having overall responsibility for the health and safety of the session, leading the coaching delivery, effectively utilising assistant coaches, monitoring overall progress within the session, providing feedback and setting the standards of conduct and behaviour for the performers and other coaches to aspire to.

This lead role may be unfamiliar to learners, so they should be given exposure to a controlled coaching environment that offers the opportunity to explore their leadership, communication and feedback skills as well as delivery of the coaching programme, receive feedback and then practice again. This feedback could come from the teaching staff, visiting coaches or their peers as it is important that the learners can empathise with the performers in the session, developing their ability to read what is happening during the coaching session and adjust the programme as necessary.

Coaching speakers could be used here to perhaps deliver sessions to the learners, for them to experience first-hand different coaching perspectives and approaches and provide insight into how different coaches approach the lead coach role in different sports.

Learning aim D

One of the key skills of an effective head coach is to monitor the progress of performers in the coaching sessions and make adaptations where required that ensures the aims of the session are met and the performers are involved in a coaching programme that meets their needs.

To develop these skills in the learners, this learning aim encourages the review process, by offering a framework for review, suggesting the key areas that could be reviewed to add value to future sessions. As well as sharing the learners own thoughts and ideas about their own sessions, having access to guest speakers can provide great insight into how different coaches approach this area of coaching and what strategies are accessible to ensure coaching sessions and programmes are successful.

Following reflections on the success of the coaching sessions and impact on the programme, learners should again be challenged to assess the areas they need to develop and seek professional development opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and experience.

Transferable skills

Preparing for work

- Understanding the role of the head coach and how they can work within a coaching team to support a sports performer
- Planning, delivering and reviewing coaching sessions and coaching programmes, and developing a plan for future improvement

Developing practical and technical skills

- Communicating with sports performers to understand their performance needs and communicate technical and tactical information.
- Displaying appropriate skills and standards of behaviour.
- Applying knowledge to real-life situations.

Legislation, regulations, policies and procedures

- To coach safely in line with health and safety, equity and safeguarding legislation
- To manage personal data in line with data protection legislation

Managing information

- Problem solving to identify technical and tactical deficiencies in performance and develop plans to enhance and practice these skills
- Managing personal information
- Self-management and development.

Key teaching areas in this unit include:

Sector skills	Knowledge	Transferable skills/behaviours
• Understanding the roles and responsibilities of a head coach • Planning delivery and review of coaching sessions & programmes • Applying knowledge to real-life situations	• Understanding of principles relating to programme planning & profiling, leadership and feedback and how they relate to the coaching process • Health & Safety, Data Protection and Safeguarding legislation, principles & procedures	• Communication • Working with others • Thinking skills/adaptability • Problem solving • Management of information • Self-management and development

Employer involvement

This unit would benefit from employer involvement (face to face and or virtual) in the form of:

- links with local sports coaches and performers from local/regional/national sports clubs, teams and governing bodies
- guest speakers from grass roots and performance sport
- development of assessment materials in partnership with health and sport professionals.

Assessment guidance

These are only suggestions, and assessor can utilise professional judgment, to support this please consider the selection cited within 'key summary of the types of evidence used for BTEC Nationals' in Appendix 1 of the spec. Where unsure on use or considering different method utilise the 'ask the expert service'.

This unit is internally assessed. It is suggested that learners may be required to produce two summative assignments for this unit, however centres can structure the assessment process internally to ensure that learners have the opportunity to achieve all of the all the learning aims.

The relationship of the learning aims, and criteria is:

Learning aims: A & B (A.P1, A.P2, B.P3, B.P4, A.M1, B.M2, AB.D1)

Learning aim C & D (C.P5, C.P6, C.P7, D.P8, C.M3 C.M4, C.D D.D3)

Example assessment strategies

Learning aims A & B - Learners produce participant case files, aligned with goals and bespoke coaching plans.

Learning aims C & D - Learners record progress of participants and adaptations of programme in a progress log, supported by records of coaching sessions.

Assessment 1 requires the learner to develop a written coaching portfolio that reflects a coaching programme plan. Within the portfolio, learners must provide evidence as to how they have identified the individual needs and initial performance level of the participants in the programme and planned a series of coaching sessions that address these needs and cater for the respective performance levels. This could be recorded in the form of individual case files for each participant in the group, clearly identifying their motivation, performance profile and individual needs.

The second part of the portfolio will be a series of session plans that reflect the needs of the coaching group, building from the evaluation of the individual profiles. The session plans should provide evidence of being linked and progressive and show how activities

can be differentiated for the individuals within the session, as well as outlining the rationale behind the extra non-session support.

Assessment 2 will involve the delivery of the planned sessions within the coaching programme, supported by a team of assistant coaches, so as such a tutor observation of coaching and leadership performance should be completed. This observation will be assessed in conjunction with the session planning information and will consider the communication skills used with participants, the style of delivery in relation to the group needs and the ability to differentiate and employ the assistant coaches to promote optimum learning of the group. The observation should also take into consideration the learner review of the coaching session.

Learners will also be assessed delivering individual feedback during the observed coaching session, the coaching session review process and the progress log notes in the individual profiles (as developed as part of learning aim A). The observed coaching session will assess the ability of the learner to analyse the performance of individuals within the group and offer relevant interventions to enhance performance. The coaching review will assess the ability of the learner to reflect on the success of the session (in relation to the session learning outcomes) and develop plans for future session development. The progress of each individual should be recorded in the individual profiles as a record for future sessions and will provide a view of how effective the coaching programme has been with the different individuals in the group.

Delivering the unit: suggested activities

This provides you with a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.

Digital solution available

Aligned directly to support this unit [Sport 2019+](#)

Unit D1: Applied Coaching Skills	Modules	Features
	6 modules	Check your learning (formative assignment)
	88 topics	1 End of module summary (reflection)
		1 End of module assessment (Summative style)

Learning aims / topic areas	Suggested Activity	Suggested time allocation
A1 Needs of participants	Outline the nature of the learning aims and the assessment task that learners will be expected to complete, using the specification, ensuring they understand relevant key terms from the specification. Introduce learners to the importance of coaching to the sports industry. Recap the role of the coach and different coaching environments across a range of sports. Ask learners to work in pairs to identify the coaching experiences they have had in different sports. They should discuss positive and negative experiences. Pairs to provide feedback on their experiences of coaching programmes within a range of sports and to build a list of positive traits of coaching programmes. Introduce learners to the common barriers to accessing sport and exercise. Arrange learners in groups and get them to explore their experiences of coaching and balance against their knowledge of what prevents people from participating. Groups to provide feedback on their discussion and how they would make a coaching session/programme more accessible. Ask learners to work in small groups. Ask each group to research one of the needs that	12 hours

	participants may have to become engaged in a coaching programme: - psychological/social needs - technical/tactical mastery - health and fitness. Learners will present their findings to the whole group as an annotated poster. Introduce learners to the different motivations participants may have to become involved in a coaching programme. This will link the participant needs presentation information to different sections of the community. - This would include different performance levels (beginners, developing, advanced), different stages of maturation (younger children, adolescents, adults, older adults), gender, socioeconomic group, ethnicity. - Disability sport will also be covered in parallel to the different participant needs. There will be extra considerations of special equipment/facilities required to include this group. Groups to reconvene and review their annotated posters against the different participant types. The poster should be revised to cover the motivations for one of the given participant types. Learners then present their findings to the whole group. Invite a head coach from a local sport organisation or National Governing Body to speak to the learners, providing an overview of how they determine participant needs within their sporting environment.	
A2 Profiling	Tutor to present pre-prepared the case study data sets to the learners that focus on demographics, personality types, amount of sports experience and personal motivation to take part in the coaching programme. Ask learners to work in pairs to review the participant data from a set of case studies across a range of different sports. Learners to consider the data presented and determine what was significant in the data and how they would plan and manage the coaching activities based on it. Tutor to present the concept of performance profiling and how this relates to different sports at performance level. Learners to discuss some case study sports examples and complete a profile on their own technical, tactical, physical and psychological performance related to a sport of their choice. In pairs, learners should discuss the implications of this information to the head coach. Groups to discuss the content of the previous profiling sessions and determine the key information they would need to create a case file on an individual for use in a coaching programme.	14 hours

	Arrange an outside visit to local authority sports development unit to find out how they use data to plan sports coaching programmes. Learners to discuss their thoughts and findings following the visit and start to consider how they will use this in the planning of their coaching programmes.	
B1 Preparing the coaching team for coaching	Introduce the need for ensuring the coaching team are aligned to the aims and purpose of the programme, have a good understanding of the needs and nature of the individuals within the group and how the head coach intends to manage the programme. The practical application of the presentation is then how this information is transferred to the rest of the coaching team through a pre-programme briefing. Ask learners to work in pairs to discuss their experiences of working as part of a coaching team (or as a player/performer who has received coaching) including their experiences of head coach briefings where relevant. Pairs asked to develop a list of considerations as to what makes this briefing positive and feedback to the group. Groups will be given a communication challenge, where they have to work together to build an object based on verbal communication alone. This could be a Lego activity, with one group member explaining the steps and the rest of the team completing the building or drawing a picture based on instructions. Groups to review the exercise and how the lessons learned relate to communication within a coaching team. Groups will be given a series of challenges to complete, with a head coach leading a team of assistant coaches. This will enable learners acting as the head coach to apply their communication skills to the coaching scenario and enable the completion of the challenge through the actions of their team. Groups to review the exercise and how the lessons learned relate to communication within a coaching team.	14 hours
B2 Planning a coaching programme	Reinforce the need for a robust planning process and its importance in ensuring the sessions are successful. Focus on the need for clear session aims and objectives, to enable the effective review of success in each session. This is then extended into the planning of a linked and progressive coaching programme.	16 hours

	Define differences in planning requirements for individual and team sports (e.g. progression, differentiation, opportunities for providing feedback) and discuss how the learners' own past experiences from different sports apply. Invite a head coach from a team sport and one from an individual sport to present their respective approaches to planning their coaching programmes. Introduce the concept of periodisation (macro, meso and micro coaching cycles) and how they relate to a coaching programme. In groups, learners are to apply the periodised cycles to a chosen sport and identify the key considerations for each phase. Groups to also consider how the different performance levels (beginners, developing, advanced) and different stages of maturation (younger children, adolescents, adults, older adults) impact on these considerations. Groups to then feedback the conclusions from their discussions. Introduce the idea of the aims behind a coaching programme (in contrast to a specific session aim) – what does the programme aim to achieve, what will the participants in the programme experience and gain from the programme etc. Learners to discuss the aspects that influence the coaching programme aims such as participant needs, coaching style and methods, what additional personal development is relevant (physical development, lifestyle, nutrition, psychology, leadership, feedback). Ask learners to research in pairs, the local marketing of coaching programmes through social media. Pairs to consider how the programme is marketed, and how the aims are communicated in relation to their target participant group. Pairs to feed back to the rest of the group. Discuss with the learners what additional personal development might be relevant to include as part of the coaching programme (lifestyle, leadership, feedback), how this could be built into the planning process. In groups, learners to identify additional areas within their sport and plan these into a programme and contrast between other sports. Groups to offer feedback on their planning activity.	
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B3 Planning individual coaching sessions	Revisit and discuss the purpose and key features of a coaching session plan, including; clear aims and objectives, health and safety, timings, suggested differentiation of activities. Learners to undertake a practical coaching activity that takes simple practical tasks that can adapted to make them easier or more challenging to provide differentiated practice. Ask learners to plan a coaching session for a chosen sport. The second part of the activity is to extend the session to a linked and progressive three-session programme	10 hours
Assessment of learning aims A and B	Time allocated for learners to write Assignment 1. Learners to be given access to computers with internet access, textbooks, journals and magazines.	6 hours
C1 Leading a coaching programme	Reinforce the importance of a consistent coaching process, especially when delivering a programme of coaching alongside support staff. This will cover the equipment requirements, health and safety processes and safeguarding. Lead a discussion on the coaching process, the structure of a coaching session (including warm up, main activities, cool down). This should enable the group to reflect on their coaching experiences and relate back to the strengths and weakness, either as a coach or player. Tutor to model an effective coaching session with the group, supported by a session plan (this could be delivered by a guest coach if relevant). Lead a discussion to review the previous practical coaching session, linking knowledge of theory with practice. Introduce the concept of coaching philosophy and provide guidance to the group as to how they can develop and articulate their own. Invite a head coach from a local sporting organisation to share insight into their coaching philosophy. Ask learners to draft their coaching philosophy then discuss with their peers. Reinforce the importance of communication within coaching (verbal, non-verbal, listening, questioning) in relation to the nature and needs of the coaching group. Potentially introduce a body language practical activity, by reviewing recorded coaching sessions and analysing body language of head and assistant coaches (as well as the performers involved in the sessions).	18 hours

	Introduce the concept of the ideal learning & development environment and discuss how coaches can create an ideal environment through their coaching behaviours – this could be their communication style, professionalism, inclusion, appearance, humour etc. Ask learners to identify some behaviour traits that they think would be successful with different participant groups (age groups/ability groups/disability sport etc.). Reinforce the learning theories/leadership styles covered in Unit C1: Developing Coaching Skills (conditioning, observational, autocratic, democratic, laissez faire). Within a practical coaching context, the tutor should model some leadership styles when delivering a range of sports skills – learners also to contribute to some peer-to-peer sessions applying the different coaching approaches. Ask learners to apply the skill classifications from Unit C1 (open/closed, gross/fine, simple/complex, discrete/serial/continuous) and suggest which styles/methods would be most appropriate to deliver them. Learners split into groups with each group given a learning theory/leadership style covered in the previous practical group activity (conditioning, observational, autocratic, democratic, laissez faire) and asked to apply it to the delivery of coaching in their chosen sport. Learners will be asked to show when the assigned style might be successful in their chosen sport and when other approaches may be more effective. The overviews will then be presented back to the group. Discussion as to how coaches can problem solve effectively to enhance the development of the performers in the programme. This would include the ability to observe (against an ideal technical model), analyse performance, adapt the session where required, and provide feedback to promote change. Practical activity where groups have a technical task to complete and the learner coach has to problem solve to enable success. This could be a competitive team challenge. Identify a speaker that is involved in conflict management and resolution (e.g. police officer, prison officer, paramedic, referee) to speak on how they identify potential conflict and manage and resolve conflict proactively. In groups, ask the learners to reflect on the speaker and how the content relates to the coaching situation.	
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C1 Leading a coaching programme (practical delivery)	Peer-reviewed practice coaching session delivery. Groups split with learners having the opportunity to lead the rest of the group in a coaching activity. The sessions will be led by a learner appointed as head coach with the rest of the coach group being the assistant coaches. The group being coached will be asked to provide peer review to the coaching group.	16 hours
C2 Feedback techniques and cycle	Tutor to present the principles behind delivering feedback as part of the learning process and offer some different models of providing feedback. Tutor will explain the features of effective feedback that are consistent across different sporting activities. These might include the use of questioning, being non-judgmental, appropriate detail, timing, relevance, specific. Invite a head coach to from a local sporting organisation to share insight into how they plan and deliver their coaching feedback. Practical activity where groups have a technical task to complete and the learner coach has to provide feedback with peers, offering their review of the feedback techniques used afterwards. Discussion as to the role of feedback in the coaching process and how learners found providing feedback to each other in the task.	14 hours
C3 Leadership	Present the principles behind leadership and why it is important for the delivery of a coaching programme. Presentation will cover some common leadership styles, the process of delegation in a coaching setting, managing the coaching team and monitoring ongoing performance. Revisit the principles of the Duty of Care concept and discuss the approach to working with wider stakeholders (parents/carers/welfare officers) in the duty of care process. Review and discuss the learners' own experiences of leadership in the coaching programmes they have been involved in as either a coach or performer. Learners to research a prominent coach/leader from a sport of their choice and explain what traits they have that make them successful. Learners to then discuss their research to investigate the similarities and differences between the coaches/leaders. Practical activity where groups have a technical task to complete and the learner coach has to provide leadership to the rest of the group with peers offering their review afterwards.	14 hours

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	Invite a senior coach (governing body, regional, national level) who runs a coaching programme that has support staff to offer insight into their leadership approach.	
D1 Monitoring participant progress	Present the process of reflection and review of progress. The key aspect is to review the coaching against the aims of the programme – are the participants getting what they need from the programme? In pairs, ask learners to identify what areas can be monitored in the coaching programme based on review. Learners split into groups to undertake a reflection and review activity. Recordings of learners coaching sessions from previous weeks to review and consider what could be changed for future sessions, based on the performance of the performers in the sessions. Tutor to present the considerations of how and why to adapt the programme to suit the needs of the group. Ask learners to identify what areas can be adapted in the coaching programme based on review.	12 hours
Assessment of learning aims C and D	Learners to revisit their planning documents developed from learning aims A and B, to ensure fitness for purpose in relation to the delivery of the coaching programme. Delivery of the coaching programme where learners will each deliver a coaching programme based on their plan. The programme will involve a minimum of six linked and progressive sessions and will show evidence of ongoing monitoring and adaptation in relation to the performance of the participants. Learners to discuss their experiences from their coaching delivery and identify what areas they need to develop in the future.	30 hours

Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications

Several other units from this qualification complement this unit. These include:

- Unit A: Careers in the Sport and Active Leisure Industry
- Unit B: Health, Wellbeing and Sport
- Unit C1: Developing Coaching Skills
- Unit C3: Professional Sports Performer
- Unit 3: Sports Psychology
- Unit 10: Technical and Tactical Skills in Sport
- Unit 20: School Sport Delivery.

Resources

The 2019 qualifications are industry-focussed, and it is key that learners maintain up to date understanding and also visibility of key developments and influences within the market.

Social Media

Twitter

@_UKCoaching
@researchhub
@CoachingManual
@The_SC_Podcast
@iasc_me_uk

Instagram

ukcoaching
UKCoachingBible
CoachingVoice

Websites

www.cimspa.co.uk Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity

<https://www.ukcoaching.org/resources/topics/search?order=popular>
UK Coaching resources

<https://community.ukcoaching.org/spaces/17/coaching-children-ages-5-12/blogs/general/111/the-importance-of-making-your-sessions-fun-and-engaging-for-5-12-year-olds>

Information around engaging children in coaching sessions.

<https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/learn-at-home/how-to-coach-plan,-do,-review>

Information regarding coaching, planning, 'doing', and reviewing.

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/coaching/article/coa20090629> CPD June
Support from British Cycling in planning effectively

<https://www.sportsperformancebulletin.com/endurance-psychology/psychological-aides/performance-profiling-essential-tool-aspiring-athletes/>

Performance profiling: an essential tool for aspiring athletes

<https://www.olympic.org/athlete365/safeguarding/>
Safeguarding toolkit from the International Olympic Committee.

<https://www.thehighperformancepodcast.com/>
Insights into performance coaching and leadership

Textbooks

Cummins, O'Boyle & Cassidy – Leadership in Sports Coaching: A Social Identity Approach (Routledge, 2017) ISBN 978-0367233396

Gill, A.J.G (ed) – Foundations of Sports Coaching: Applying Theory to Practice (Routledge; 3rd edition 2021) ISBN 978-0367746971

Nicholls, A. Psychology in Sports Coaching: Theory and Practice details (Routledge; 3rd edition 2021) ISBN 978-1032062600

Definition of key terms

Performance profiling – a method that identifies the aspects required for a performer to be successful in a sport and challenges performers and coaches to assess their current performance levels and their aspirational levels to work towards.

Demographics – the study of human populations and characteristics

Periodisation – a process of dividing the annual coaching or training plan into a series of manageable phases

- Macrocycle – the annual/season plan which contains meso and Microcycles
- Mesocycle – refers to a particular block of the season that may have a specific coaching or training focus (e.g. pre-season)
- Microcycle – a short unit of coaching/training which could be a week or an individual coaching session

Coaching philosophy – set of values, beliefs and guiding principles that determine how a coach operates

Open/closed questioning – an open question allows the responder to provide an extended answer, whereas a closed question only allows a yes or no answer

Feedback loop – where the coach provides feedback to the performer, they take it on board and effect a change in performance, which again receives further feedback, with the process repeating

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