

# FAQs Regarding to Regulate or Not to Regulate? Should BASES seek Health Professions Council (HPC) regulation of the profession of sport and exercise scientist?



This leaflet is the second in a series and provides a summary of the issues raised by members from the online forums, individual e-mail enquiries and conversations at the Find Out More Q&A Sessions.

## Q. Where are we in the process?

The process started in 2008 when the Annual General Meeting (AGM) agreed to explore regulation. Late in 2008 and into 2009, members of the BASES Board examined HPC regulation and held two informal meetings with the HPC. The first phase of an application is consultation with members to see if they support such a move. Consultation is happening between March 2010 and September 2010. There will then be a vote at the AGM in September 2010. If the vote is in favour of regulation, documentation will be prepared.

The documentation required is considerable and we estimate a submission to the HPC might take place by early summer 2011. The HPC board then decides on suitability and might reach a decision by the end of 2011 or in early 2012. A recommendation then passes to Government and a bill is presented to Parliament. This last phase depends on parliamentary business and could take from a few months to several years.

## Q. Is there an alternative body to the HPC?

No.

## Q. What name is being regulated? What can I call myself?

The initial suggestion for the name (known as the regulated title, protected by law) is "Sport and Exercise Scientist". Other suggestions are welcome but there are constraints. The HPC will not accept a long list of names and would prefer a single one. There are just too many permutations of the words sport, exercise, biomechanist, physiologist, psychologist, analyst, etc. We cannot work round this by using parentheses; e.g., Sport and Exercise Scientist (Physiology).

Some members see this as a problem as they want their title to reflect their exact specialism. Others do not see a problem; they view the title "Sport and Exercise Scientist" as the base description for the profession (in the same way as people external to other professions see no problem with physiotherapist, doctor, engineer etc.), and then describe any particular speciality in other ways as their career develops.

## Q. Will regulation help my career?

This is highly likely because registration provides an employer with a clear Kitemark of capability and professional practice. Whilst the existing BASES Accreditation scheme does this, Accreditation has no legal standing and is recognised predominantly within the sport environment, not the exercise

environment. The health sector in particular is rapidly growing and in many cases the public sector uses HPC regulation as a requirement for employment. The National Health Service (NHS) is required by law only to employ registered individuals for those professions regulated by the HPC. The HPC produces a useful summary of the benefits, called "10 benefits of regulation", which can be seen on the BASES website and are summarised overleaf. It is likely that future employment prospects with the NHS, public bodies and private organisations will be enhanced if the profession of sport and exercise scientist is regulated, since these employers will recognise the benefits of legal protection and independent regulation.

It might be argued that progress in any career depends on a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience, and no single marker or qualification forms an absolute guarantee. Some employers, in some sectors, may see no advantage in selecting a registered individual over an unregistered one.

## Q. How does regulation fit with BASES Accreditation?

The two processes are in harmony. If BASES proceeds with regulation, we will propose that Accreditation is taken as the entry standard to the HPC register. The Accreditation process already defines the education, skills, knowledge and professional practice of sport and exercise science. There will then simply be a final application to the HPC for registration. Registration with the HPC will be possible without Accreditation, but candidates will need to prove, independently, their education and competence.

## Q. What if I am already Accredited. Will I need to start again?

No. The HPC provides a "grandparenting" scheme whereby existing practitioners can become registered. Furthermore, since the BASES Accreditation scheme is harmonious with the HPC's statements of competencies, anyone who is working towards BASES Accreditation is already on the right pathway to HPC registration.

## Q. Where is the profession going? How is it compatible with HPC regulation and the BASES vision?

The profession continues to expand. Growth is likely in sport-related fields as athletic performance continues to benefit from scientific analysis and support. Growth is also likely in exercise-related fields, consequent to the continued recognition by both governments and individuals of the benefits of an active lifestyle from childhood to old age.

The BASES vision seeks to support this growth of the profession through the three strands of its strategic plan: (a) Research, evidence-based practice and the distribution of knowledge; (b) High professional standards; (c) Representation of sport and exercise science. BASES sees sport and exercise science as achieving a maturity that evidences a profession in its own right, not a sub-profession of another.

To this end, the work with SkillsActive, our own Accreditation schemes, our own continuous professional development (CPD) provision and linking to HPC regulation, all go to form a progressive pathway for career development that is based on our own professional standards, but harmonious with national and legal frameworks.

The counterargument is that the profession of sport and exercise scientist is actually simply an applied facet of a parent discipline such as physiology or psychology. The application of these subjects will wax and wane according to the prevailing climate (i.e., the Olympic Games), but the fundamental home remains in the tradition of the parent discipline.

### Q. What about the cost?

The financial costs are a one-off non-refundable application payment of £53 and applicants must also pay a registration fee at the point of applying for registration. The registration fee for the two-year registration cycle is £152 (£76 per year). Some employers may pay this on your behalf, others may not. The fee is allowable against tax, the same as a BASES membership fee; although this cost would be in addition to the cost of BASES membership.

For a BASES Professional Member, assuming the occasional workshop and other form of CPD, the total average annual cost of a BASES membership, Accreditation, HPC registration and CPD activities might total about £300 per annum. This cost must be weighed against membership benefits, legal protection and employment prospects.

### Q. What does the HPC require for a profession to be regulated?

The following list is issued by the HPC.

Aspirant groups must:

1. Cover a discrete area of activity displaying some homogeneity
2. Apply a defined body of knowledge
3. Practise based on evidence of efficacy
4. Have at least one established professional body which accounts for a significant proportion of that occupational group
5. Operate a voluntary register
6. Have defined routes of entry to the profession
7. Have independently assessed entry qualifications
8. Have standards in relation to conduct, performance and ethics
9. Have Fitness to Practice procedures to enforce those standards
10. Be committed to CPD.

**BASES fulfils all 10 of these requirements.**

### Q. Do I have to be HPC registered to remain a BASES member?

No. Some members (e.g., working in lecturing or research) may feel that registration offers insufficient benefits and is inappropriate to their academic ambitions. Others, who work in applied and practice areas, will certainly feel that the advantages of HPC registration are clear.

For certain sectors (e.g., health service work), it might be that HPC regulation becomes a requirement of a job. However, if you wish to use the title "Sport and Exercise Scientist" in your work as a practitioner then you will need to be HPC registered.

### Q. What about BASES Re-Accreditation and maintaining HPC registration?

Both require demonstration of CPD. The requirements for BASES Re-Accreditation are harmonious with continued HPC registration.

### Q. How is BASES consulting? How can I make my opinion heard?

- **Have Your Say from April to August:** Join the online "To Regulate or Not to Regulate" forum at [www.bases.org.uk/Forum](http://www.bases.org.uk/Forum).
- **Have Your Say in June:** Join the online survey on key issues concerning "Should BASES Seek HPC Regulation of The Profession of Sport and Exercise Scientist?" This will include what the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register should be and what title(s) should be regulated.
- **Final Vote at the BASES AGM:** 7 September, 12 pm, University of Glasgow. Vote "Yes" or "No". If accepted, BASES will prepare and submit an application to the HPC. If rejected, BASES will cease the process.

## 10 benefits of HPC registration

- 1 Protecting professional titles
- 2 Independent regulation
- 3 Professional input - your involvement
- 4 Protection against rogue practitioners - upholding your profession's reputation
- 5 Recognising the professions – including being employed in the NHS
- 6 Defined standards of conduct, performance and ethics – clear guidance for registered professionals
- 7 Dealing with ill health and practice
- 8 Defined standards of proficiency
- 9 Professional and consistent assessment of international applicants - maintaining standards
- 10 Working in the European Economic Area - freedom of movement.

**The Health Professions Council -**  
[www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)