

UKSCA – PAS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The UKSCA is committed to continually improving its assessment and in March this year, at the UKSCA Assessors' development day, a more significant change to the plyometrics, agility and speed (PAS) element was proposed as follows.

Rationale

As a group, the assessors identified a number of areas that they wanted to address, including:

- There are too many unknowns for the candidates
- The videos and sports are outdated
- There is a lack of understanding of plyometric versus ballistic/explosive activities
- Candidates often recite definitions, but don't coach the athlete in front of them
- Within the limits of a 20-minute assessment, we should aim to maximise the practical coaching time, so we need to look at assessing some of the competencies from this element in a separate theory element of the assessment process.

In addition, the UKSCA wants to improve the clarity – for employers and others – of the minimum skills and knowledge that a competent coach needs to have for this area.

Revising the assessment

The outline principles of a revised assessment process were agreed on the development day and a team of assessors was formed to detail all aspects. An industry expert in competency-based assessment was also recruited to this team. At key stages in the detail of their work, the project team have consulted with the wider assessor group, both current and 'retired' assessors, as decisions are made. They also ran a pilot assessment day in June 2017 with

Table 1. Assessment Day Candidate Guidelines. Plyometric, ballistic, speed and agility activities (PAS) – Scenarios

SCENARIO	WARM UP	PLYO / BALLISTIC	SPEED / AGILITY
You are asked to coach a performer. They and their technical coach would like you to help improve their acceleration and deceleration and ballistic upper body strength	Deliver an appropriate warm-up	1. Kneeling medicine ball overhead throw 2. Standing wood chop throw	Linear acceleration, deceleration to a stop
You are coaching a performer whose technical coach would like you to help them improve their transition into acceleration over 5 metres and their jump ability	Deliver an appropriate warm-up	1. Alternate leg bounds 2. Hurdle jumps	Side shuffle to acceleration
You are coaching a performer who requires good acceleration from a variety of start positions. They and their technical coach would like you to help improve their jump ability and their initial acceleration	Deliver an appropriate warm-up	1. Box to box jumps 2. Counter movement jumps	Linear acceleration from varied start positions
You are coaching a performer. They and their technical coach would like you to help their ability to turn and reaccelerate	Deliver an appropriate warm-up	1. Drop landings 2. Horizontal jumping	180° turn
You are coaching a performer who needs to address issues in running technique. The technical coach and performer would like you to help improve their maximum running speed	Deliver an appropriate warm-up	1. Tuck jumps 2. Drop jumps	Max velocity running drills
You are coaching a performer whose sport requires good change of direction ability. They and their technical coach would like you to help improve their ability to change direction	Deliver an appropriate warm-up	1. Split jumps 2. Lateral bounding	Outside foot cutting

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students from the University of Gloucester and have now finalised all materials, ready for a launch on all assessment days, for both new and renewing members, from 1 January 2018.

The pilot process in itself was informative, not just to test the new assessment process in a ‘live’ environment, but also for the invaluable feedback from the pilot candidates about how they feel they could be better prepared for assessment with these changes.

Overview of the revised assessment process

The assessment will no longer have the sporting videos at the beginning; instead it will be based around six athletic scenarios with pre-defined drills against each (as in Table 1). The scenarios and the drills will be made available publicly and can be found on the UKSCA’s website.

Each scenario will have 1 x speed/agility drill and 2 x plyometric/ballistic drills; there will be 18 drills in total and candidates need to be prepared for each. On the assessment day, candidates will be randomly assigned to a single scenario and will then be required to coach another candidate through a warm-up, 1 x plyometric/ballistic drill and 1 x speed/agility drill.

As per the current process, they will then act as an athlete for another candidate’s assessment and a selection of standard equipment, such as micro-hurdles, cones and medicine balls, will be available.

The scenarios are only in place to give a context in which to visualise the activity. Candidates are still required to coach the athlete in front of them and be prepared to regress or progress the activity as appropriate.

Agreeing the scenarios and drills

As you can imagine, this wasn’t an easy task and the project team had a number of factors they needed to consider in making their selection. For example:

- They wanted to develop a broad range of baseline skills for a competent, Accredited S&C coach
- They had to consider the common restrictions of equipment and venues
- They had to keep in mind the 20 minute total assessment time, and select drills that would enable candidates to fairly demonstrate competence

- They also wanted to cover a range of sporting actions, ie, those that are most likely to be required for working in S&C in the UK, and checked this against the 2016 State of the Nation survey data.

Further information

On the UKSCA website you can now see updated candidate guidelines, demonstration videos and supporting information for all 18 drills. More detailed technical models of each drill will also be made available to those who have attended the UKSCA’s PAS workshop as part of the workshop resource pack.

It is important to highlight that the competencies required for this revised assessment process remain unchanged: it is just the way that they are assessed that has changed. A competent coach in the current assessment process would still be a competent coach in the revised version, but we have improved the overall assessment process in this area and have provided a clearer, more well-defined, structure for the candidates and the standards required of a competent coach.

The new process will be in place for all assessment days in 2018, whether for a candidate being assessed for the first time or for a retake.

Figure 1. The number of S&C coaches working in a variety of sports in the UK – State of the Nation survey 2016

