

Maine Community College System
Five Year Program Review

College: Central Maine Community College
CIP: 31.0507

Program: Physical Fitness Specialist
Credentials: Associate in Applied Science (AAS)

Review Team: David Lewis, Natalie Stotz, Jeff Green, Eric Berg, Diana Drown, Jim Allard, Maria D’auria, Madeline Fenlason

Date: September 2025

Period of Review: AY 2021-2425

Program Overview:

1) **Program description** *(from the most recent college catalog):*

The Associate in Applied Science Degree in Physical Fitness Specialist is designed to meet the rising demands in the growth of health and wellness field and to help students pursue opportunities in the job market of the medical industry. Students will be required to sit for the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) exam upon completion of the degree.

2) **Program Learning Outcomes: all program learning outcomes are expected to be assessed within the five-year cycle. Please attach an Assessment Data and Reflection Template for each program learning outcome. Explain how the department used the assessment results to improve teaching, learning, and the curriculum.**

List the program learning outcomes:	Method of assessment: list the courses and activities/assignments used to assess the learning outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the physiology and mechanics of human movement related to the major components of physical fitness, health and sports. 2. Demonstrate a strong foundational knowledge of the human body systems and the acute and chronic adaptations on the body through modalities, exercise and lifestyle changes. 3. Define the psychological principles critical to health/wellness behavior changes. 4. Describe, discuss, compare/contrast and demonstrate the role of the Physical Fitness Specialist as a member of the healthcare team in modern healthcare. 5. Assess dietary habits and recommend developmental and maintenance interventions. 6. Develop safe and effective recommendations and provide lifestyle changes to support clients or teams through needs inventory, goals and specific objectives. 7. Recognize, manage and provide preventive practices for basic musculoskeletal injuries through proper understanding of evaluation of 	

movement, range of motion and muscle imbalances of the human body. 8. Demonstrate ACSM and CSCS professional standards in the field of exercise science and client care.	
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3) Credentials Awarded within the IPEDS year, i.e. July 1-June 30:

Credentials Awarded					
Credential	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425
AAS	4	4	4	4	0

4) Program Graduates Employed:

Number of Completers with any Wage Data	--
% of Completers with any Wage Data	--
# of Completers with First Year Earnings	--
Median First Year Earnings	--

5) Partnerships, collaborations, associations and memberships

a) Advisory Meeting Dates and Attendance (past 3 years)

*This advisory committee has been inactive since 2018.

<i>Date(s) of Meeting</i>	<i># of college attendees</i>	<i># of Non-college attendees</i>
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b) Program external accreditation, associations, and memberships (if applicable):

6) Other Indicators of student success, direct and/or indirect, which may include:

	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425
Licensure/certification pass rates (if applicable)	--	--	--	--	--
Program Advisory Committee Member Survey (on scale of 1-5 averaged):	--	--	--	--	--
Program Curriculum	--	--	--	--	--
Technical currency of the program	--	--	--	--	--
Preparation of program graduates for work in the field	--	--	--	--	--
Communication from program administration/faculty	--	--	--	--	--
Overall quality of the program	--	--	--	--	--
Other (please specify):	--	--	--	--	--

7) Student demographics:

Admissions					
	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425
Fall Applications	60	51	37	44	43
% chg in Fall Applicants from PY	--	-15%	-27%	19%	-2%
Enrolled (Yield)	20	13	9	15	7
% chg in Enrolled from PY	--	-35%	-31%	67%	-53%

Student Enrollment ¹					
	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425
Unduplicated Headcount Enrolled in Program	33	24	21	21	17
% chg in Headcount from PY	--	-27%	-13%	0%	-19%
Enrolled Credit Hours	354	274	256	243	202
% chg in Credit hours from PY	--	-23%	-7%	-5%	-17%
FTE	24	18	17	16	13
% chg in FTE from PY	--	-25%	-6%	-6%	-19%

¹ = students within the program in the fall of the academic year

Student Success					
Cohort Year	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425
Cohort Enrollment	26	17	13	21	15
Retained to the next semester	38%	71%	38%	24%	40%
Retained to the next year	19%	41%	15%	24%	--
Graduation Rates					
100% of program time	12%	12%	15%	0%	
150% of program time	12%	12%	15%		
200% of program time	12%	12%			
Transfer Rate (non-graduates) ²	27%	24%			
Transfer Rate (graduates)	8%	6%			
Enrolled in Another Program ²	8%				
Graduated from Another Program ²	12%				

². Determined at the maximum graduation point in this table, i.e. 200%

8) Strengths, challenges, and planned steps for continuous improvement: In your summary assessment you should reference sections of this review that informs the plan.

Program Strengths:

- The full-time faculty member, adjunct faculty member, and department chair are motivated to provide a high-quality education and real-world experiences for the students. We are excited to make necessary changes and bring our extensive experiences and knowledge to benefit the students.
- We recently hired a full-time faculty member this summer to teach and advise both PHF and Exercise Science students. This provides consistency for the students and individualized mentoring and feedback. We also have an experienced adjunct faculty member to teach some of the PHF and Exercise Science classes. This gives students a different perspective and another mentor for advising.
- Faculty are tailoring classes to provide more certification opportunities outside the classroom. For example, the Methods of Lifestyle Coaching class (PHF 150), recently added coaching and educational material from the American Council on Exercise (ACE). This material helps reinforce the student learning outcomes of the class and students could take the exam to become an ACE Certified Health Coach once the class is completed.
- The PHF Program provides a less rigorous curriculum as an option for students who are unable to complete or not interested in the Exercise Science Program. However, a transition to the Exercise Science Program can be done without significant setbacks for the student.
- This program has narrow career field choices after graduation. This can make it easier for students who want to be a fitness professional and are not interested in transferring to a four-year institution. However, these limited options after graduation are also considered a challenge.
- The PHF Program provides multiple class modalities for instruction which includes online, on ground, and hybrid. This meets the needs and provides flexibility for students.
- The Exercise Science, Athletic Training, and Physical Fitness Seminar (PHF 110) class prepares students for success in their education and future careers. This class has recently been updated to include important material and experiences needed for student success. Some examples include attending a transfer fair, discussing career opportunities, resume writing, professionalism, time management, and ways to improve self-directed learning.
- The CMCC Fitness Center is currently run by a PHF graduate and he has been a great mentor for students.
- The Field Experience (PHF 197) and Practicum (PHF 299) classes provide students with real-world work experiences that they can include on their resume when applying for jobs after graduation. It is not always easy for students directly out of school to have work experience.
- The PHF curriculum includes choices for classes related to business. The students can choose to take Business Math (MAT 101) and/or Business Communication (ENG 220). This is important for students wanting to enter fitness professional careers because business is often an aspect of their work.
- Transfer agreements with Southern New Hampshire University and the University of Southern Maine (both for a B.S. in Health Science) were updated in the past two years. We did not renew the agreement with University of Maine Farmington's B.S. in Community Health Education, Physical Activity & Nutrition Concentration because its program was changed substantially to a B.S. in Health Promotion and Wellness, which has different requirements and is not aligned with the PHF Program. Students seeking transfer opportunities changed to the Exercise Science Program, so efforts to create transfer opportunities were made in that program.

Challenges:

- We only recently hired a full-time instructor for this program. Prior to this, a majority of the program classes have been taught by adjuncts. This affects consistency of program goals, student learning, recruitment, and other important aspects of education.
- When the PHF Program was created in 2011, the intention was that it could serve both as a career program and a transfer program. After the first few years, a number of would-be transfer students left the PHF Program and migrated to General Studies for more transfer flexibility. When the Life Sciences program began a few years later, students often left PHF for LIF, as it was also a better fit for transfer purposes. We learned over time that the PHF Program as designed was more geared toward a career pathway, with limited transfer options.
- As noted above, the PHF Program has limited transfer options because the curriculum is not aligned with related bachelor's degree requirements in Exercise Science and Pre-Athletic Training. Efforts were made to create an articulation agreement with the University of Southern Maine into their B.S. in Exercise Science degree, but it was not feasible given the misalignment of requirements. PHF students could complete the Exercise Science Program instead and get to the desired career endpoint while providing more flexibility in transfer and career choices, meeting their needs.
- PHF students are required to sit for the American College of Sports Medicine Exam (ASCM) upon completion of the degree. However, the Associate in Applied Science Degree in Physical Fitness Specialist is not a requirement to take this exam. Students only need a high school diploma or equivalent as an education requirement. Yet, this exam is a requirement for the Practicum class (PHF 299) and costs \$300. Students could do the same job with industry certification and a degree is not required.
- There is no wage data available from the Department of Labor for analysis.
- The PHF Program has not shown growth over the past five years.
- The Advisory Committee has been inactive since 2018.
- The COVID pandemic should be noted as a challenge. The timing of COVID occurred during the end of the last PHF Program review and the beginning of the Exercise Science Program. This challenged program decision making, student enrollment/retention, and other potential aspects not directly observed.

Planned steps for continuous improvement:

- The decision to continue the PHF Program or transition to Exercise Science should be made after careful consideration of all existing data. This would include analyzing data on transfer destinations for PHF students through the National Student Clearinghouse, as well as employment data for careers with an associate's degree in this field (i.e. number of local opportunities, salary and benefit information, etc.).
- Aspiring transfer students could complete the Exercise Science Program instead to reach their transfer goals at the bachelor's degree level (and eventually a related graduate degree program, if desired). Students with a career focus may be better served by taking industry-related examinations for the certifications needed in their field, many of which do not require an associate's degree.
- If the PHF Program continues, we must prioritize recruitment, retention, growth, and strengthening community partnerships. An Advisory Committee should also be reassembled.
- Continue to utilize Brightspace for quality educational materials and assessments for students. This LMS also provides data for continued analysis of strengths and challenges.
- We could consider retaining and revising some of the PHF courses, renaming them as EXS courses, and keeping the most relevant for students in the Exercise Science Program.

Five-year Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes

Physical Fitness Specialist

September 2025

Name of Program or General Education Domain

Date

Learning goal:

Student learning outcomes:	Academic year during which assessment will occur	Source(s) and type of assessment artifact(s) that will be collected (e.g.: embedded questioning, capstone assignments, standardized testing, performance observation, portfolio reviews, etc.)	Method(s) to be used for assessing artifact(s)	Assessment Goal (targets/criteria) for direct measure	Assessment Outcome (<i>Number of Students Achieving an "acceptable" or better</i>)	Assessment Goal was:		
						Met	Not Met	Pending Review

Most significant assessment findings? (Pedagogical, instructional, curricular changes). Please report on actions taken and on ongoing assessment plans.