

AFAA-CGFI EXAM BLUEPRINT

The Athletics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) contracted with ACT Learning and Professional Services to conduct a practice analysis of Certified Group Fitness Instructor (CGFIs) in 2020.

This practice analysis study defines the current knowledge and tasks that must be demonstrated by entry-level credential holders to safely and successfully practice. This study also serves as the “blueprint” for determining the content (performance domains) for the certification exam(s).

Performance Domains as validated by the 2020 Job Analysis Study include the information below:

Domain 1: Fundamentals of Exercise Science	27%
Domain 2: Class Design and Planning	30%
Domain 3: Class Instruction and Presentation	30%
Domain 4: Professionalism	13%

Domain 1: Fundamentals of Exercise Science

This domain encompasses the scientific knowledge bases that are fundamental to all activities performed by group fitness instructors.

Knowledge of:

- k1. Basic structure, function, and integration between nervous, muscular, and skeletal systems
- k2. Basic structure, function, and integration of cardiovascular and respiratory systems
- k3. Fundamentals of kinesiology, including basic biomechanical terminology and how internal systemic actions along with outside forces create human movement
- k4. Fundamentals of exercise metabolism, nutrition, and bioenergetics, including basic training adaptations
- k5. Integrative training concepts (such as flexibility, cardiorespiratory, core, static and dynamic balance, strength, plyometric, SAQ, and resistance)
- k6. Adaptation, progression, specificity, overload, and recovery concepts
- k7. Health benefits of exercise (such as improved body composition, preventing chronic disease, stress management, mind-body connection, and increased energy)
- k8. Benefits of group fitness formats (such as accountability, commitment, and sense of community)
- k9. Basic considerations for special populations (such as participants who have medical and orthopedic conditions, older adults, pre- and postnatal participants, and participants who have other special needs)
- k10. Physiological responses to environmental conditions (such as temperature, humidity, altitude, and pollution)

Domain 2: Class Design and Planning

This domain encompasses the essential tasks performed when designing and/or planning for a well-structured and balanced fitness class for a diverse group of participants in order to create a safe, effective, and engaging class and reduce the potential for injury.

Tasks

- A. Define class objectives (such as cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength, stability and core, flexibility, and mind-body connection) based on the class description to create a goal-oriented class.
- B. Select specific exercises appropriate for each class component (such as movement prep [warm-up], main body of the workout, and transition [cool-down]) based on class description and objectives, with consideration of various potential fitness and skill levels of participants.
- C. Identify appropriate equipment based on class description and objectives, with an understanding of the safe and varied uses for common exercise equipment, environmental constraints, and various potential fitness levels of participants.
- D. Identify types and sources of music and make selections based on the context of the class (such as appropriate BPM for activity, using music genre/styles conducive to activity, demographics, and class description) in order to create a safe, effective, motivating, and dynamic experience.
- E. Identify considerations and adaptations for various class environments (such as virtual, outdoors, gym, and personal studio).
- F. Design class movements, combinations, choreography, and transitions to ensure class flow and support proper form and safety.
- G. Select options and develop a plan for incorporating modifications, progressions, and regressions for specific exercises used in the class based on considerations for participants at varying levels of fitness.
- H. Develop a plan to change class components periodically and strategically by varying elements such as music, exercises, and intensity in order to support continued participant engagement and retention.

Knowledge of:

- k11. Basic components of a class (such as movement prep [warm-up], main body of the workout, and transition [cool-down])
- k12. Class types/formats (such as dance, aqua, indoor cycle, interval, resistance, and flexibility) and the benefits and expected results
- k13. Considerations for various class sizes, locations, and environments (such as virtual, indoor, outdoor, pool, small spaces, and flooring types)
- k14. Methods to improve potential for results (such as adjusting/altering frequency, intensity, time, type of training, or tempo)
- k15. SMART goal development
- k16. Proper movement prep (warm-up) techniques and exercises
- k17. Proper transition (cool-down) techniques
- k18. Proper techniques to increase muscle strength and endurance
- k19. Proper techniques to improve cardiovascular fitness
- k20. Proper techniques to increase flexibility and improve mobility (such as static and dynamic stretching)
- k21. Basic techniques to improve stability and balance
- k22. Appropriate exercises for use in different class formats
- k23. Proper sequencing, transitions, combinations, and movement flow

- k24. Exercise modifications
- k25. Exercise progressions and regressions
- k26. Various group fitness-related equipment, appropriate and safe uses, space requirements, and considerations for participants' fitness levels
- k27. Music volume/decibel guidelines
- k28. Music styles and BPM/tempo appropriate for different class formats and class components
- k29. Music structures (such as chorus, verse, 32-count phrase, radio edits, non-stop mixes, and playlists)
- k30. Differences between freestyle, pre-designed, and pre-choreographed class formats

Domain 3: Class Instruction and Presentation

This domain encompasses the essential tasks performed to deliver a positive, safe, and effective group fitness class. These tasks include verbal and nonverbal coaching, demonstration, monitoring, and providing modifications.

Tasks

- A. Communicate a clear and concise introduction consisting of name, class format, duration, and equipment required to participants to set expectations.
- B. Demonstrate correct exercise form and technique.
- C. Instruct participants using various cueing techniques in order to facilitate safe and effective movement execution and transitions.
- D. Utilize positive and inclusive coaching techniques (such as verbal, nonverbal, and music-based cueing) to motivate participants and encourage continued class/program participation.
- E. Monitor participants' exercise/movement, form, posture, and exertion levels to identify contraindications or the need for individualization.
- F. Provide feedback, corrections, regressions, and modifications appropriate for class participants' fitness and skill level in order to prevent injury.
- G. Provide movement options to accommodate different fitness goals and enhance participants' experience.
- H. Instruct participants on how to monitor their own intensity (including cardiovascular, musculoskeletal stress/strain) to enable them to exercise at the most appropriate level.
- I. Maintain the flow and structure of classes, including adapting to unexpected conditions (such as interruptions, potential conflicts, changes in room temperature, equipment failure, and insufficient equipment).

Knowledge of:

- k31. Various learning styles (such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic)
- k32. Communication strategies (such as speaking clearly, making eye contact, and body language awareness)
- k33. Coaching and motivation techniques to engage participants and enhance program adherence
- k34. Distinctions between virtual and in-person instruction and presentation (such as visibility of participants, generalized vs. tailored feedback/cueing, and engagement strategies and techniques)
- k35. Participant-centered teaching approaches
- k36. Appropriate class objectives and design characteristics that should be communicated to participants to set expectations
- k37. The major types of classes (including cardio, strength, flexibility, mind-body, and fusion) and the benefits associated with each

- k38. Various cueing techniques (such as verbal, nonverbal, and music-based cueing) and when to use them
- k39. Proper body alignment and posture during exercise (neutral spine, lordosis, kyphosis)
- k40. Safe and effective exercise technique (such as joint alignment and range of motion)
- k41. Correct mechanics for each exercise, movement, balance, and stabilization
- k42. Physical signs and symptoms of over- and under-exertion, fatigue, and dehydration
- k43. Heart-rate response to various class components
- k44. Methods of monitoring exercise intensity (such as rate of perceived exertion [RPE], talk-test, monitoring devices, form checks, and pain levels)
- k45. Variations for exercise complexity, impact, and fitness levels (such as adding or removing arm movements or jumping, performing push-ups on knees or toes)
- k46. Appropriate responses to unexpected environmental conditions (such as interruptions, potential conflicts, changes in room temperature, equipment failure, and insufficient equipment)

Domain 4: Professionalism

Tasks

This domain encompasses the essential tasks focused on working within the confines of scope of practice and safety, legal, and ethical requirements as well as tasks required to increase success as a group exercise professional.

- A. Work within the confines of legal and ethical practices (such as client confidentiality, instructor-participant relationship, and music trademark/copyright).
- B. Demonstrate professional behavior (such as effective communication, punctuality, appropriate attire, and appropriate language [verbal and nonverbal]).
- C. Operate within scope of practice.
- D. Maintain requirements for liability insurance and participant liability waivers in order to minimize risk for the instructor and organization.
- E. Foster class growth and participant loyalty and retention by building rapport and using marketing strategies.
- F. Engage in self-management (such as protect voice, monitor workload, and avoid overtraining) in order to stay healthy and injury-free as well as prevent burnout.
- G. Respond to emergencies while adhering to established protocols and documentation requirements.
- H. Promote inclusion and equity for a diverse population.

Knowledge of:

- k47. Applicable music licensing laws
- k48. Client confidentiality requirements
- k49. Credible sources of information
- k50. Established industry guidelines regarding ethical practice (such as IDEA Code of Conduct and AFAA Code of Conduct)
- k51. Scope of practice and limitations (such as nutritional, medical, and psychological advice)
- k52. Liability insurance requirements
- k53. Proper/appropriate physical contact with participants
- k54. Considerations when recording content and using social media (such as proprietary content, appropriate content, participant agreement, music licensing, and facility considerations)
- k55. Emergency response preparedness and documentation requirements

- k56. Aspects of professional behavior (such as punctuality, appropriate attire, appropriate language, and inclusivity)
- k57. Customer service strategies to foster class growth and increase participant loyalty and retention
- k58. Marketing strategies to foster class growth and increase participant loyalty and retention, including social media strategies
- k59. Potential risks and occupational hazards for group fitness instructors (such as overuse injuries, overtraining syndrome, and vocal damage) and how to prevent them