

PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

Institution: University of Louisville
Program Name: Exercise Physiology
Degree Destination: Bachelor of Science

CIP Code: 26.0908

Credit Hours: 120

Implementation Date: 8/1/2024

Program Description

The Exercise Physiology program will prepare students for careers in allied health, physical and health education, and human performance fields. The program is currently a track within the Health and Human Performance program and is ready to be elevated to a stand-alone major. The new program will deliver a curriculum providing students with a deep and comprehensive understanding of human physiology and the ways in which human movement and exercise initiate structural and functional adaptations at the biochemical, physiological, and biomechanical levels.

The curriculum is designed to progressively build critical thinking skills and provide students with skill sets required for immediate entry into careers in human performance, individual and corporate health and wellness, physical and health education, and exercise rehabilitation. This degree will also provide students with the content knowledge to achieve K-12 teacher certification immediately following graduation. For students wishing to pursue graduate degrees, the curriculum will prepare students for admission to advanced terminal degrees (DPT, OT, MD, DMD/DDS, PhD), as well as successful completion of placement exams and certifications.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- Comprehensively understand exercise physiology principles, including how the human body responds to exercise at biochemical, physiological, and biomechanical levels.
- Utilize data to inform decision-making processes and convey complex exercise physiology concepts and findings to diverse audiences in written and oral presentations.
- Make inferences about human movement, physiological processes, and exercise testing and prescriptions for exercise.
- Through student teaching and field experiences, lead and manage classroom interaction in K-12 schools.

The program will have three tracks – Allied Health Therapies; Human Performance; and Physical and Health Education.

Connection to Other Programs

The Exercise Physiology program will replace the current Health and Human Performance undergraduate degree, which has successful tracks in Exercise Science and Physical and Health Education. The current Exercise Science track within the Health and Human Performance program has approximately 500 students and is one of the largest programs at the university.

Northern Kentucky has a program in the same CIP code. The learning objectives and the curricular focus of the proposed program are different than NKU's. And, as noted, this is a popular track within an existing program at UofL, so the university has the infrastructure and expertise to implement this as a stand-alone major. Furthermore, the current Exercise Science track at UofL is one of a few select undergraduate programs in the country that is recognized as a flagship program by two of the most influencing governing bodies in the field: American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA).

Student Demand

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 61

Year 2 – 64

Year 3 – 71

Year 4 – 69

Year 5 – 66

Employment Demand

Graduates will be prepared for a variety of fields. The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics projects that exercise physiologist jobs will grow nationally by 13% from 2020 to 2030. Projections are that there will be approximately 1,500 openings for exercise physiologists annually. For the fields of athletic training and exercise or group fitness specialists, there is projected growth of 23% (3,100 employees per year) and 39% (69,100 employees per year), respectively, across the same 2020-30 timeframe.

In 2021, reported median salaries were \$47,940 (exercise physiologist), \$48,420 (athletic trainer), and \$40,700 (exercise trainer). Importantly, the state of Kentucky and the regional metropolitan area of Louisville are expected to grow jobs in this industry segment at a rate close to the national average.

In addition to these market opportunities, it is anticipated that many graduates will pursue terminal degrees and graduate education in the allied health and human performance fields (medical scientists, chiropractors, physician assistants, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and nurse practitioners). The demand for qualified employees in these fields is projected to increase over the next decade.

Budget

The ability to market this program directly, as opposed to its current status as a track in the Health and Human Performance program, will stimulate outreach efforts, ultimately increasing enrollment numbers over time. Budgetary estimates based on conservative enrollment projections suggest the new Exercise Physiology program will provide a positive rate of return on investment beginning immediately after its inception. There are currently approximately 425 full-time students enrolled in the Exercise Science track in the existing Health and Human Performance program. At a rate of \$331 per credit hour, those students provide the department with over \$4.2 million dollars in tuition revenue each year.

Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):	\$ 10,391,745
Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):	\$ 8,282,945