

US Registry of Exercise Professionals

A professional's success is, to a large degree, the outcome of processes developed over time. It entails more than can result from any single event or particular occurrence; it is rather shaped through experience. Experience may be related to, or attained via education, one's work environment, shadowing/mentoring or a combination of all three. The idea that someone can become a professional due to a single experience is ultimately flawed. Experience allows one to assemble an effective framework based on the decisions and actions associated with success and failure. This is accomplished by analyzing positive and negative patterns and proactively responding in a manner that provides for professional growth. After all, it is said that experience is life's best educator.

A second component to professional development is identifying milestones in job task proficiency. This is necessary to ensure an ongoing process of competency enrichment in one's trade endures over his or her professional tenure. All too often individuals seek to reach a level of professional capability, and then become lazy in the efforts that follow. For this reason most professions use objective milestones to define one's capabilities. Foundational education, specific credentialing markers and ongoing learning are used to ensure a professional's expertise is maintained at all times.

In some cases the role of the profession places unique qualification standards upon those performing the job to protect

consumers or related stakeholders from harm. This is commonplace in medical and trade fields where error can cause another person direct harm. For instance, in a hospital a pharmacist must know which drugs negatively interact with each other, while a nurse should know what the medications they provide are for; as well as the signs and symptoms that occur if a patient is given the wrong medications. On the sports field, athletic trainers must be properly trained and evaluated to manage emergency procedures during a sporting event, while strength coaches must be

jobs associated with a particular industry are clearly defined and understood. They help delineate requisite education, training, and credentialing to identify those who are qualified to perform associated work; and are often involved in the process of providing guidelines, recommendations, and standards to protect consumers within the industry. In addition, many organizations advocate for their professionals around the scope of work performed under its umbrella. Within the fitness industry there are different organizations that serve a diverse population of exercise professionals.

health education providers for practitioners who have passed a competency-based program using an exercise certification exam that has been accredited by the NCCA. Primary to the mission of the Coalition is to provide individuals of all ages and abilities with resources and leadership to assist in safely and effectively reaching their goals of achieving more active, healthy lifestyles through movement, physical activity or exercise for recreation or performance.

CREP advances its mission by maintaining the United States Registry of Exercise Professionals (USREPS), an internationally-recognized registry of exercise professionals practicing in the United States, and by acting as an advocate for exercise professionals who hold NCCA-accredited exercise certification on issues that pertain to regulation, access, and scope of work. With the growing attention placed on the profession, there has been a corresponding increase in the scrutiny of professional qualification standards and a rapidly emerging need for stakeholders to accurately identify qualified exercise professionals. The need to protect consumers and serve stakeholders has led to a number of actions including 1) bills that would bring regulation to the profession, 2) the establishment of registries in Europe and other countries, 3) emerging standards for health and fitness facilities that define the qualifications of professional fitness staff, and 4) interest expressed by other professions in the professional scope of practice that exercise professionals currently enjoy in the U.S. Through a



able to identify signs of over-exertion and heat stress during training. This is also true within the fitness industry. In fact, all exercise professionals are responsible for service safety. They must know who can safely exercise and what level of activity is appropriate for the individuals they train. They must provide instruction for safe operation of equipment as well as performance of physical activity while also monitoring for environmental risk factors. In addition, they must remain up-to-date on related guidelines and clearly understand and respect their professional scope of practice. Each of these aspects is necessary for consumer safety and programmatic effectiveness.

In most cases, professional organizations serve in a peer-supervisory role to help ensure the

Each role in the profession has unique aspects that require more or less training and education in route to certification for successful performance. Due to the fact that many exercise roles exist, it is important to provide stakeholders with a large professional population.

To better serve the health and fitness community and help promote physical activity engagement by a larger relative percentage of the U.S. population; lead fitness organizations have formed the Coalition for the Registration of Exercise Professionals (C-REP). CREP is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) corporation composed of organizations that offer NCCA-accredited exercise certifications. Coalition members are committed to advancing the fitness profession and earning recognition as

shared voice, the Coalition brings a unified message to the industry, policymakers, and standard-setting organizations that represents nationally-recognized best practices. This optimally serves the qualified exercise professionals and the stakeholders of the profession including the general public.

Therefore, while CREP will serve organizationally on advocacy efforts and the promotion of exercise professional roles in the United States, the USREPS will function as a clearing house of qualified exercise practitioners that have been vetted against a uniform standard for stakeholder protection. Stakeholders of certification including consumers, employers, organizations and regulators will be able to accurately verify credentials in real time to ensure all professionals uphold their responsibilities to maintain valid credentials. Immediate benefits include:

- Rapid and reliable credential verification for consumers hiring exercise professionals
- Ongoing support for HR department management of exercise professionals employed corporately who are required to remain certified
- Real time updates as to credential expiration dates and related information for NCCA-credentialed profes-

sionals for self-monitoring and marketing

- Assurance to referring professionals that credentials are legitimate, valid, and up-to-date
- Credential accuracy assurance for regulators considering registry requirements in a particular state or municipality
- Recognition of verified qualifications by International registers and US organizations requiring NCCA credential pre-requisites for advanced certification

Certainly these are just a few of the great aspects the registry provides to stakeholders within the fitness industry. And while CREP advocacy on behalf of the profession may be of the greatest value to stakeholders of NCCA-accredited programs, the history of other professions suggests that registration is an important step in profession maturation. Data on registered professionals and those that are regulated, such as Registered Dietitians and Athletic Trainers, suggests that professionals vetted against a uniform standard are more likely to take their career more seriously, better comply with recertification and education requirements, increase the length of their professional tenure, and use the profession as the primary means for career advancement. If exercise pro-

fessionals are to enjoy recognition as health providers and become part of the dialogue for prevention-based medicine, other aligned professions must respect the competency and abilities of the practitioners within the field (if they are to refer); regulators must recognize the process of qualification attainment and maintenance in a manner consistent with current practices in the US to prevent redundant regulatory processes; consumers must feel both safe and confident that the professionals they use are able to serve their best interest(s); and exercise professionals must be confident in their knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve in these roles. The United States Registry of Exercise Professionals is an important first step in this process.

The registry is designed to provide a very user-friendly experience, less the fan fair. Much like any non-commercial, public information site it is void of any advertising or marketing. Certificant information will be protected and not be available to anyone outside of the registry. The registry will simply provide a certificant's name, credential name, certification number, expiration date, and state of residence. The verification extends to any NCCA-accredited certification provided by member organizations, so an individual can

be verified for more than one credential in any of the supported roles which include group exercise instructors, Pilates instructors, personal training, strength and conditioning coach, and exercise specialists for special populations. To use the registry simply go to www.USREPS.org. It is searchable by any data field but works most efficiently when more than one data field is completed. An important aspect of the registry is it is loaded with data from member organizations. Therefore, if a certificant does not see their name (or there are spelling errors) or a person has a name change they must contact the certifying organization to update or correct any data inaccuracies.

The United States Registry of Exercise Professionals is the first step in a process of encouraging the industry to engage in best practices. Any organization that maintains an NCCA accredited program is able to join as a membership organization. This suggests that the whole industry has the opportunity to participate if they choose. Lead organizations are encouraged by the positive industry response and look forward to ongoing profession maturation, a heightened level of recognition and career advancement for our stakeholders.

NCSF Career Center

The NCSF Professional Career Center is full of employers with something in common – they are all seeking qualified NCSF professionals.

The Career Center provides job opportunities from around the country and is updated everyday.

Go online to review, apply, and get the job you are looking for today.