
Qualification Specification

iSP3D32 – VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Sports
Massage

603/4501/9

About VTCT Skills

VTCT Skills is a market-leading specialist vocational and technical Awarding Organisation.

We offer a comprehensive range of qualifications, assessments and services in 17 sectors, including Hairdressing, Beauty, Logistics and Early Years. Working closely with employers and training providers, our ranges are backed by industry and trusted around the world.

With over 3,000 training locations, we help over 120,000 learners achieve professional skills that transform their lives, every year.

For more information, please visit our website or contact our dedicated Customer Support Team via email; customersupport@vtctskills.org.uk or call +44 (0)23 8068 4500.

www.vtctskills.org.uk

Qualification at a glance

Qualification title	VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage
Qualification number	603/4501/9
Product code	iSP3D32
First registration date	01/10/2019
Age range	16-18, 19+
Credit value	37
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	370
Guided Learning (GL) hours	225
Assessment	To be awarded this qualification, learners must successfully achieve the following assessments: • External practical examination • External theory examination • Portfolio of evidence containing - Treatment evidence - Assignments
Grading	Pass/Merit/Distinction
Entry requirements	It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that learners have the required knowledge, understanding and skills to enrol and successfully achieve this qualification.

About this qualification

Aims and objectives

The main aim of the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage is to enable learners to gain the necessary practical and theoretical skills in order to provide sports massage therapy treatments to the general public and to gain employment in the sports industry. This qualification is suitable for learners aged 16 and over and is designed to provide occupational competence at level 3. It also provides a sound platform into further training at level 3 and 4.

Content

This qualification is for learners who want to work within the sports industry. The qualification consists of 5 mandatory units with a total of 225 hours of Guided Learning (GL) to achieve the full qualification.

The main skills the learner will perform are:

- Consultation methods – to include obtaining informed consent prior to assessments and application of the massage where necessary, carrying out accurate client assessments, obtaining information on the possible cautions and contra-indications to massage before commencing any treatments, adapting the massage routine to meet the specific needs of the client
- Applying sports massage treatments – to include preparing a safe and hygienic working environment, performing pre-event, inter/intra-event and post-event massage techniques, maintenance, selecting massage mediums, evaluating the effectiveness of the treatment and giving aftercare advice

The learner will also develop knowledge about client care and communication, health, safety and hygiene, relevant legislation and professional standards which are essential to work and be successful in the industry.

This qualification also provides:

- The related knowledge and understanding required to perform the sports massage therapy listed above effectively, in particular knowledge of anatomy and physiology for sports massage, understanding the principles of soft tissue dysfunction, professional practice in sports massage and the principles of health and fitness that may influence the treatment
- Opportunities for learners to focus on the development of their wider skills in a sports massage setting, such as communicating with clients, working with others and problem solving
- Opportunities for learners to develop a range of skills, techniques, personal qualities and attitudes essential for successful performance in employment as a sports massage therapist

Opportunities for progression

Once learners have achieved the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage they may progress on to other VTCT Skills or equivalent qualifications at level 3 and 4 for example:

- Level 4 Certificate in Sports Massage
- Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training (Gym-based Exercise)
- Level 3 Diploma in Pilates Teaching
- Level 3 Diploma in Yoga Teaching

Opportunities for employment

There are opportunities for a sports massage therapist to find employment in a variety of areas:

- Gym
- Health club
- Spa
- Cruise ships
- Hotels or resorts
- Own sports massage clinic
- Sporting events

Relationship to National Occupational Standards

This qualification has mapped to National Occupational Standards where they exist and has ensured that best practice in the workplace has been reflected in the qualification. This qualification is linked to the relative job roles as well as ensuring that the qualification reflects the required level of knowledge and ability for the sports massage therapist at level 3.

Qualification structure

To be awarded the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage, learners must achieve all mandatory units.

The minimum GLH required to achieve this qualification is **370**.

The minimum TQT required to achieve this qualification is **225**.

Table 1

Unit code	Mandatory units	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Unit reference number	Unit weighting for the overall qualification grade
iUSP160	Anatomy and physiology for sports massage	70	A/617/5649	50%
iUSP174	Principles of health and fitness	20	H/617/5676	0
iUSP150	Professional practice in sports massage	30	F/617/5622	0
iUSP181	Understand the principles of soft tissue dysfunction	15	R/617/5690	0
iUSP178	Sports massage treatments	90	F/617/5684	50%

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Guided Learning Hours is ‘the activity of a learner in being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training’. This includes ‘the activity of being assessed if the assessment takes place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training’.

Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required, in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

Assessment

All treatment evidence, internal assessments, assignments and underpinning knowledge must be completed prior to the final practical examination.

The final external practical examination will be carried out by the external examiner at the end of the period of learning. The external examiner will also verify a sample of the treatment evidence, internal assessment and assignments.

Table 2

Unit code	Mandatory units	Assessment	Grading
iUSP160	Anatomy and physiology for sports massage	MCQ	Pass 50%-74% Merit 75%-89% Distinction 90%-100%
iUSP174	Principles of health and fitness	Portfolio of evidence – Assignment	Pass/Refer
iUSP150	Professional practice in sports massage	Portfolio of evidence – Assignment	Pass/Refer
iUSP181	Understand the principles of soft tissue dysfunction	Portfolio of evidence – Assignment	Pass/Refer
iUSP178	Sports massage treatments	Practical examination	Pass 60%-74% Merit 75%-89% Distinction 90%-100%
		Portfolio of evidence – 25 treatments	Pass/Refer

Unit specifications and additional supporting material for this qualification can be found on the VTCT Skills website.

Grading of the qualification

Learners must achieve a Pass grade or higher in the requisite number of units as specified in the rules of combination, see Table 1 above. Only mandatory units which are graded Pass/Merit/Distinction will contribute to the overall grade.

Practical examinations and theory examinations will be graded Pass/Merit/Distinction.

Portfolio of evidence containing the following will be graded Pass/Fail:

- Treatment evidence
 - 25 sports massage treatments to be performed on five different profile clients (Case studies can be made through a number of combinations)
 - 10 logged treatments to include pre-event, post-event and maintenance massage routines on specific areas of the body. **These do not need to be documented**
- Assignments

The overall qualification is graded Pass/Merit/Distinction.

Grade boundaries for units and the overall calculation for the qualification grade are open to annual review. Following this review, these boundaries and overall calculations can be adjusted by VTCT Skills. This review and possible change within a qualification are to ensure the standard of the qualification grade is upheld throughout the qualification's lifecycle.

Theory examination

All theory tests must be conducted in a controlled environment and follow the procedures defined by VTCT Skills. The theory tests will be set and marked by VTCT Skills. The centre is responsible for ensuring the examination can operate seamlessly by organising the process as defined in the 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' which can be found on the VTCT Skills website.

Practical examination

Once all aspects of the mandatory units have been completed, learners will be expected to complete an internal mock practical assessment. This will be undertaken by the internal assessor/lecturer using the internal assessment forms. These must be handed to the external examiner on the day of the final external practical examination.

All practical assessments must be conducted in a controlled environment defined by VTCT Skills. The practical examination will be conducted by an external examiner; however, the centre is responsible for ensuring the examination can operate seamlessly by organising the process as defined in the 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' which can be found on the VTCT Skills website. The marking criteria and marking scheme can be found under the documents tab within the qualification.

Portfolio of evidence

Learners are required to provide a portfolio of evidence containing treatments and/or case studies that they have performed on clients during their training under the supervision of the lecturer who will monitor the quality of the treatments in order to ensure that they meet the criteria.

- The criteria are detailed on the treatment evidence guidance forms
- The learner will need to complete a client consultation form as evidence that they performed the required number of treatments during their training (see Table 2) as they form part of the internal assessment for the qualification. They can be stored in the learner's portfolio

Learners are required to provide assignments under the supervision of the lecturer who will monitor the quality of the assignments in order to ensure that they meet the criteria.

- The criteria are detailed on the assignment guidance forms and form part of the internal assessment for the qualification

Quality assurance

Delivery of the qualification

A scheme of work must be approved by VTCT Skills for all units prior to the commencement of the course.

Lecturers should aim to deliver the theory and practical of each unit simultaneously, i.e., both theory and practical of each unit should be taught together to ensure the underpinning knowledge is being delivered at the same time as the practical skills. This will help to ensure that learners understand the structures they are working on as a result of combining delivery with the practical application of treatments.

Centre resources

The organisation delivering the qualification must provide a suitable environment for teaching the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage as well as all equipment both fixed and free standing to complete all aspects of the qualification. Learners need to be made aware of the amount of consumables/towels they will be required to provide.

Achievement record

All units will require an Achievement Record to be completed by the lecturer for each learner. This achievement record will need to be kept by the centre and may be sampled by the external examiner or external quality assurer on their visit.

An Achievement Record for each unit can be downloaded from the VTCT Skills website.

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v0.6	14/05/2019	Draft version published to inform centres prior to September launch.	Systems Integration Team
v1.0	16/09/2019	First published	Head of Qualifications and Processing
v2.0	03/12/2019	Grading boundary review statement added	Qualification Administrator
v3.0	01/09/2020	Added COVID-19 Infection Prevention pre-requisite	Product and Regulation Manager
v4.0	01/08/2022	Removal of the COVID-19 Infection Prevention pre-requisite	Qualification Administrator
v5.0	24/04/2023	Amendment to unit iUSP178 – Assessment requirements pg. 7	Qualification Administrator
v6.0	01/01/2025	New branding	Development Administrator
v7.0	01/09/2026	Rebranding	Development Administrator