ENTRY-TO-PRACTICE

Competency Framework for Sport Science Practitioners working in Paralympic Sport

Revised: April 2026

This framework was developed for the Canadian Olympic & Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN) and National Sport Organizations (NSOs) to define structured learning objectives and identify relevant resources for sport science practitioners entering practice within Paralympic sport. It aims to establish foundational knowledge for practitioners on the high-performance pathway, supporting their progression toward advanced competence such as the Para Sport Area of Focus designation. The objectives were developed through collaboration between the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) and Sport Scientist Canada (SSC), reinforcing Canada's commitment to practitioner excellence in Paralympic sport.

The framework is organized into three progressive stages representing the developmental pathway for practitioners working in Paralympic sport:

STAGE 1: FOUNDATIONS OF PARA SPORT

Goal: Build baseline knowledge and awareness.

Learning Objectives	Resource Checklist
Ethical, inclusive practice grounded in understanding the athlete experience, whole athlete, and disability	√ CDPPs Inclusion Module
Review Paralympic Games and sanctioned sports. Familiarize with assigned sport rules, ranking & regulations	√ International Paralympic Committee: paralympic.org/sports √ Canadian Paralympic Committee: paralympic.ca/sports/ √ Paralympic Games Youtube Channel "Paralympic Sport A-Z"
Review athlete evaluation, eligible impairment types, sport classification, & minimum impairment criteria	√ Complete the IPC Classification Fundamentals Online Course √ Additional info can be found on websites on CPC Classification or IPC Classification websites
Begin professional networking with Canadian Paralympic Sport Science colleagues	√ Register as a member with Sport Scientist Canada √ Register with Paralympic Sport Science Community of Practice

STAGE 2: APPLIED DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC COMPETENCE

Goal: Observe, reflect, and begin applying knowledge

Learning Objectives	Resource Checklist
Apply athlete-centered principles to design and deliver inclusive programming	√ NCCP Coaching Athletes with Disability Module ($15) or reference manual (free)
Review literature in sport science discipline related to assigned or similar Para sports	√ Access SSC Knowledge Hub for research & resources √ Access Sport Discus, QXMD, Pubmed, Google Scholar, etc.
Review how disability can influence performance, equipment requirements and training considerations	√ Review SSC Paralympic Sport Science page √ Explore **Paralympic Sport Science Community of Practice** √ Complete SSC Paralympic Sport Modules

STAGE 3: INTEGRATED PRACTICE

Goal: Apply learnings to para sport challenges

Learning Objectives	Resource Checklist
Observe impairment-specific considerations in a different Para sport training session	√ Coordinate with your COPSIN supervisor, or sport program High Performance Director
Address a sport-specific performance or operational challenge in collaboration with a mentor or colleague	√ Work with SSC Paralympic Sport Science Community of Practice Lead to identify a mentor



COPSIN	Canadian Olympic & Paralympic Sport Institute Network
NSO	National Sport Organization
IPC	International Paralympic Committee
CPC	Canadian Paralympic Committee
OTP	Own the Podium
SSC	Sport Scientist Canada (www.sportscientistcanada.ca)
AFC	Area of Focus Competency
CONFERD-HP	Competency Framework Development in health professionals
CDPP	Canadian Disability Participation Project (www.cdpp.ca)
NCCP	National Coaching Certification Program
HPC	High Performance Certification Program (www.sportscientistcanada.ca/high-performance-certification)