



Alvernia
University

Exercise Science Program

Academic Year 2026-2027

Student Handbook & Policies

(August 2026)

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Introduction

Welcome to the Exercise Science Program at Alvernia University. We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue your education with us and look forward to supporting you as you prepare for a rewarding career in health, human performance, fitness, wellness, rehabilitation, or graduate and professional education.

The goal of the Exercise Science Program at Alvernia University is to prepare knowledgeable, ethical, and compassionate professionals who promote health, improve human performance, and enhance the quality of life for individuals and communities. Consistent with Alvernia University's mission, the program fosters intellectual curiosity, service to others, lifelong learning, and professional excellence while preparing graduates to become innovative leaders in a rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

This handbook serves as a guide for students throughout their academic journey in the Exercise Science Program. It outlines program policies, procedures, expectations, and resources designed to support student success. Students are expected to review this handbook regularly and become familiar with the responsibilities and standards associated with the program.

The Exercise Science curriculum provides a strong foundation in the scientific principles of human movement, exercise physiology, biomechanics, nutrition, motor learning, and health promotion. Through a combination of classroom instruction, laboratory experiences, community engagement, and experiential learning opportunities, students develop the knowledge, technical skills, and professional behaviors necessary for success in a variety of health and performance settings.

Students gain valuable hands-on experience through laboratory courses utilizing Alvernia University's state-of-the-art instructional and clinical learning environments. These experiences allow students to apply evidence-based concepts, develop practical assessment and intervention skills, and build confidence working with diverse populations. In addition, internship and experiential learning opportunities provide students with real-world experiences that prepare them for employment or continued study in graduate and professional programs.

One of the program's greatest strengths is its dedicated faculty. Our faculty bring extensive academic, clinical, and industry experience to the classroom and are committed to mentoring students throughout their educational journey. They strive to create a supportive learning environment that encourages critical thinking, collaboration, professionalism, and personal growth.

Whether your goal is to pursue a career in exercise science, strength and conditioning, wellness, corporate fitness, rehabilitation, healthcare, or graduate education, the Exercise Science faculty are committed to helping you achieve your professional aspirations.

We are excited to welcome you to the Exercise Science Program at Alvernia University and look forward to partnering with you as you develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to become a leader who serves the common good through excellence in health and human performance.

Alvernia University Mission Statement

Guided by Franciscan values and the ideal of "knowledge joined with love," and rooted in the Catholic and liberal arts tradition, Alvernia is a rigorous, caring, and inclusive learning community committed to academic excellence and to being and fostering broadly educated, life-long learners; reflective professionals and engaged citizens; and ethical leaders with moral courage.

Alvernia University Vision Statement

To be a distinctive Franciscan University, committed to personal and social transformation, through integrated, community- based, inclusive, and ethical learning.

Alvernia Core Values

Service, humility, peacemaking, contemplation, and collegiality—these core values are rooted in the mission statements of the Bernadine Franciscan Sisters and Alvernia University. They form the foundation for decision-making, for program development, and for our relationships with each other in the pursuit of our personal, communal, and educational goals. They make education at Alvernia University distinctive. As members of the Alvernia University community, each of us, no matter our role, willingly proclaims common ownership of the core values.

<https://www.alvernia.edu/about/franciscan- tradition/franciscan-values>

Alvernia University Exercise Science Program Culture and Learning Environment

The Alvernia University Exercise Science Program fosters a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, integrity, and accountability. Faculty, staff, and students work together to prepare future professionals who are knowledgeable, compassionate, ethical, and committed to promoting health, wellness, and human performance. Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, respect, and responsibility in the classroom, laboratory, experiential learning settings, internship placements, and all interactions with peers, faculty, mentors, and community partners.

The Exercise Science Program embraces the mission and values of Alvernia University by promoting excellence, service, lifelong learning, ethical leadership, and a commitment to the common good. Through meaningful academic and experiential learning opportunities, students are encouraged to become reflective practitioners who contribute positively to their professions and the communities they serve.

Alvernia University and the Exercise Science Program are committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that values individuals of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, cultures, religious affiliations, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and other visible and non-visible differences. Every member of the Exercise Science community shares responsibility for creating an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

While the University carefully develops partnerships with experiential learning and internship sites that reflect these values, we recognize that external environments may differ in culture and practice. Students are encouraged to communicate openly with program faculty about any experiences in which they feel the University's values of respect, inclusion, professionalism, or ethical conduct are not being upheld. Such feedback is important in maintaining high-quality learning experiences and strengthening our community partnerships.

Alvernia University College of Health Sciences Mission Statement

The mission of the College of Health Sciences is to provide comprehensive, innovative experiences for students to develop into highly skilled healthcare professionals demonstrating evidence-based practices, moral integrity, and values in the Franciscan tradition, thereby advancing local and global health.

Alvernia University Exercise Science Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Exercise Science Program at Alvernia University is to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and professional values necessary for successful careers in exercise science, health promotion, fitness, human performance, wellness, rehabilitation, and related fields. Guided by Alvernia University's mission, the program fosters intellectual curiosity, ethical leadership, service to the common good, and lifelong learning through rigorous academic study and experiential learning. Graduates are prepared to contribute meaningfully to the health and well-being of individuals and communities and to pursue professional certifications, graduate education, and careers in a dynamic and evolving healthcare and human performance environment.

Alvernia University Physician Associate Program Faculty and Staff

Dean, College of Health Sciences	Patricia Reger, PhD, PT	Patricia.Reger@alvernia.edu
Athletic Training, Health, and Exercise Science Department Chair, Professor of Athletic Training	Thomas Franek, PhD, LAT, ATC	Thomas.Franek@alvernia.edu
Director of Exercise Science Program, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science	Joseph Gaiondonato, PhD, MBA, CSCS	Joseph.Gaiondonato@alvernia.edu
Assistant Professor of Athletic Training	Ashley Gray, DAT, LAT, ATC	Ashley.Gray@alvernia.edu

Program Administration

The Exercise Science Program Handbook is reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects current program policies, University requirements, and best practices. As the program continues to grow and evolve, updates may be made to enhance the student learning experience, maintain academic quality, and respond to changes in University policies or professional standards.

From time to time, the Exercise Science Program or Alvernia University may revise program requirements, policies, procedures, course offerings, academic schedules, or other aspects of the curriculum. When changes are necessary, the Program will make every effort to communicate them to students in a timely manner. Updates may include modifications to course content, class schedules, experiential learning or internship opportunities, degree requirements, academic policies, tuition and fees, or other University regulations.

While every effort is made to avoid disruptions, circumstances may occasionally require the University to modify, reschedule, or cancel classes, experiential learning activities, internships, or other academic experiences. In such cases, the Program will work with students to provide appropriate alternatives whenever possible and will communicate changes as promptly as practical.

Students are encouraged to review this handbook regularly, as it serves as an important resource throughout the program. If you have questions about any policy or procedure outlined in this handbook, please contact the Exercise Science Program Director or another member of the program faculty. We are committed to supporting your success and are happy to provide clarification or guidance whenever needed.

Program Accreditation

The Exercise Science Program at Alvernia University is committed to continuous quality improvement and to meeting nationally recognized standards for excellence in exercise science education.

The program is currently preparing to seek accreditation through the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences (CoAES) under the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Accreditation is a rigorous, voluntary process that evaluates program quality, curriculum, faculty, student outcomes, and institutional resources to ensure graduates are well prepared for professional practice.

In addition, the program is exploring future accreditation through the Council on Accreditation of Strength and Conditioning Education (CASCE) as part of its commitment to providing students with high-quality preparation for careers in strength and conditioning and related fields.

Program Goals

- Apply ethical principles in approaches to learning, research, and practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge in the exercise sciences including anatomy and physiology, exercise physiology and kinesiology, ECG interpretation, exercise testing and prescription, and sports nutrition. Outcome measure: Number (percentage) of students participating in community service.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and clinical proficiency in the following content areas for both apparent health and chronic disease populations: a) pre-participation screening/health risk appraisal and stratification, b) fitness assessment and evaluation, c) the design of individually tailored exercise prescription, d) appropriate exercise techniques.

Program Admission and Progression Requirements

Students are admitted to the Exercise Science Program upon acceptance to Alvernia University and by declaring Exercise Science as their major. No separate application is required for admission to the program.

To progress successfully through the Exercise Science curriculum, students must earn a grade of C or better in all required Exercise Science and supporting prerequisite coursework. Because the curriculum is designed to build progressively on foundational knowledge and skills, students may repeat a required course no more than one time, for a maximum of two attempts to successfully complete any required course. For the purposes of this policy, an attempt includes any course enrollment that results in a grade of C-, F, or W (Withdrawal). Therefore, a student may enroll in a required course a maximum of two times, regardless of whether the initial attempt resulted in a C-, F, or W.

The Exercise Science curriculum is highly structured and sequential. Many courses serve as prerequisites for advanced coursework; therefore, failure to successfully complete prerequisite requirements may delay progression through the program and extend the anticipated time to degree completion.

Enrollment in 300- and 400-level Exercise Science courses requires approval from the Exercise Science Program Director (or designee). This review ensures that students have successfully completed all prerequisite coursework, demonstrated readiness for advanced study, and are prepared to achieve the learning outcomes associated with upper-level Exercise Science courses.

Students are encouraged to work closely with their academic advisor and the Program Director to develop an academic plan that supports timely progression toward graduation.

Exercise Science Degree Completion Plans and Course Sequencing

See the following webpage Exercise Science Academic Completion Plan and course sequences.

[Exercise Science ACP AY25-26](#)

Course Descriptions and Pre-requisites

EXS Course descriptions and prerequisites are found in the AU Undergraduate Course Catalog located at this link: [Alvernia University Undergraduate Course Catalog](#)

Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	Course Prerequisites/Co-Requisites
BIO	108/118	Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab	BIO107/117 Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab
BIO	208	Neuroscience for Rehabilitation	BIO107/117 Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab and BIO108/118Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab
BIO	211/211L	Kinesiology with Lab	BIO107/117 Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab
EXSC	310	Psychology of Sport and Exercise	Psychology 101 Introductory Psychology
EXS	340	Exercise Physiology	BIO108/118 Anatomy and Physiology II with lab
EXS	365	Exercise Testing and Assessment	EXS340 Exercise Physiology
EXS	410	Organization and Administration	EXSC365 Exercise Testing and Assessment
EXS	420	Interpretation and Pharmacology	EXS365 Exercise Testing and Assessment
EXS	450	Exercise Testing and Prescription	EXS365 Exercise Testing and Assessment
EXS	465	Exercise for Special Health Populations	EXS450 Exercise Testing and Prescription
EXS	495	Internship in Exercise Science	EXS450 Exercise Testing and Prescription and PED 133

Grievance & Appeals Policy

The Exercise Science Program recognizes due process and the rights of students to appeal decision(s) or action(s) that affect their academic and professional progress throughout the program. The program will make every attempt to resolve student grievances about the Program, both academic and non-academic, internally.

Student appeals must be based on the Program's failure to follow established program policies and procedures. As such, appeals must be based on evidence that a factual or procedural error was made or that significant information was overlooked. Furthermore, an appeal submission does not guarantee a change in the decision.

Please refer to the [Alvernia University Undergraduate Catalog](#) for the Academic Appeals and Grievance policy

Title IX

The Alvernia University Title IX Officer for students is: Kimberly Lemon, Ph.D.
Executive Director of Community Standards University Life 610.796.5508
Kimberly.Lemon@alvernia.edu

For more information, please refer to the [University Title IX Webpage](#).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act-FERPA

Alvernia University maintains the confidentiality of student education records in accordance with the provisions of FERPA and accords all rights under the Act to students or alumni of Alvernia University. Please refer to the [Registrar webpage](#) for additional information.

Health Insurance Requirement

The University requires all full-time undergraduate and graduate students to maintain health insurance coverage and requires an annual copy of each student's current insurance card by August 1 for students enrolled in the fall semester and January 1 for students who are starting at Alvernia in the spring semester. This must be done once per academic calendar year.

The University does not offer a student health insurance plan. If you need health insurance coverage, the following sites offer access to purchase coverage through the federal and state insurance marketplace: www.healthcare.gov www.pennie.com

Student Immunization and Health Screening

The program follows the [University Medical Requirements](#) which is based on current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations and state specific mandates. In addition, students are expected to comply with requirements that are set by clinical sites that are based on CDC recommendations for health professionals.

All students must have documentation of immunization based on current CDC recommendations prior to matriculating into the program and prior to beginning the clinical phase of training.

Documentation is retained within the Complio platform (or other approved vendor platform utilized) All full-time students are required to complete a Medical History form which includes immunizations verified by the primary care provider and a TB screening form and risk assessment. Students enrolled in certain professional majors are also required to have a physical exam. Pennsylvania State law requires all residential students to have the Meningitis vaccine or sign a waiver after reading the CDC Meningitis information sheet. Documents are retained within the Complio platform (or other approved vendor platform utilized).

In accordance with regulations contained within the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Alvernia University Health and Wellness Center will maintain all student medical information as a Treatment Record which is separate from the student's Education Record. Information from a student's Treatment Record will only be

disclosed to designated parties with the written consent of the student, except in certain cases of threat of harm to self or others, in keeping with professional codes and/or relevant laws.

Student Services

Matriculated students have access to all services, including the Academic Success Center, Medical and Counseling Center, Fitness Center, and Accessibility Services.

Accessibility Services

Alvernia University is committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment where qualified students with disabilities have equitable access to educational opportunities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the University provides reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities.

Students enrolled in the Exercise Science Program who believe they may be eligible for accommodations are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Services as early as possible, preferably before the start of the semester or immediately upon recognizing a need. Accommodations are determined through an interactive process between the student and the Office of Accessibility Services based on appropriate documentation of the disability and the essential requirements of the academic program.

Reasonable accommodations are intended to provide equal access to learning while maintaining the academic integrity and essential learning outcomes of the Exercise Science Program. The Program works collaboratively with the Office of Accessibility Services to implement approved accommodations in classroom, laboratory, experiential learning, and internship settings whenever appropriate and feasible.

To request accommodations, students should:

- Contact the Director of Accessibility Services as early as possible.
- Submit current and appropriate documentation supporting the requested accommodations.
- Meet with the Director of Accessibility Services to discuss accommodation needs and develop an accommodation plan.
- Request an updated accommodation letter each semester and share it with course instructors in a timely manner.

Accommodation records are confidential and maintained by the Office of Accessibility Services. Faculty and program administrators are informed only of the accommodations approved for implementation and are expected to support students in accordance with University policy.

The Exercise Science Program may recommend that students utilize University resources, including the Office of Accessibility Services and the Academic Success Center, when additional academic support would enhance student success.

For additional information regarding accommodations, eligibility, and available resources, students should consult the Office of Accessibility Services or the University Catalog.

Office of Accessibility Services
Academic Success Center
Bernardine Hall, Room 105A
Phone: (610) 568-1499

Alvernia University does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, participation in, or treatment within its educational programs, activities, or employment. Qualified

students with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of University life consistent with applicable federal and state laws.

Academic Success Center

The [Academic Success Center \(ASC\)](#) provides student advising and support services. Located on the first floor of Bernardine Hall Room 105, its team includes professional, administrative, and student staff with responsibilities for Advising, Academic Support Services, and Accessibility Services. The PA Program may recommend that you utilize specific university services, such as the Academic Success Center, as part of a remediation plan.

Program Expectations and Standards

Technical Standards for Admission

The Exercise Science Program at Alvernia University is committed to preparing students for successful careers in health promotion, human performance, fitness, strength and conditioning, wellness, rehabilitation, and related professions. To ensure students are able to meet the educational requirements of the program and perform effectively in classroom, laboratory, experiential learning, and internship settings, all students must be able to meet the following technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation.

These technical standards are intended to describe the essential abilities and characteristics required for successful participation in the Exercise Science curriculum. They are not intended to deter qualified students with disabilities from applying to the program. Alvernia University is committed to creating an accessible, equitable, and inclusive learning environment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, veteran status, or any other protected characteristic.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, qualified students with documented disabilities may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Accommodation requests are reviewed through an interactive process coordinated by the Office of Accessibility Services. Students seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Services as early as possible to discuss their needs and submit appropriate documentation.

Students admitted to the Exercise Science Program are expected to maintain these technical standards throughout their enrollment. Students are also responsible for notifying the Program and the Office of Accessibility Services if a change in their condition may affect their ability to meet these standards.

Observation

Students must be able to:

- Acquire and interpret information presented through classroom instruction, demonstrations, laboratory activities, simulations, and experiential learning.
- Observe movement patterns, exercise performance, and functional assessments accurately.
- Collect, interpret, and document data related to exercise testing, physical activity, and human performance.
- Utilize visual, auditory, tactile, and other sensory abilities, or their functional equivalent, to safely participate in laboratory, fitness, and community-based learning environments.

Communication

Students must be able to:

- Communicate effectively, respectfully, and professionally with faculty, staff, classmates, clients, internship supervisors, and community partners.
- Demonstrate effective oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Explain exercise techniques, wellness concepts, assessment procedures, and health-related information in a clear and understandable manner.
- Receive, interpret, and respond appropriately to verbal and nonverbal communication.

Motor Skills

Students must be able to:

- Safely participate in laboratory instruction, exercise demonstrations, fitness assessments, and experiential learning activities.
- Demonstrate and instruct proper exercise techniques and safe use of fitness and laboratory equipment.
- Perform basic fitness, movement, and physiological assessments after appropriate instruction.
- Respond appropriately to routine and emergency situations within the scope of training, including demonstrating basic first aid and CPR skills when required by coursework or internship sites.

Critical Thinking

Students must be able to:

- Analyze, synthesize, and apply scientific principles related to exercise science and human performance.
- Interpret assessment data and apply evidence-based decision-making.
- Solve problems using sound judgment in classroom, laboratory, and experiential learning environments.
- Adapt to a variety of instructional methods, including lectures, laboratories, simulations, collaborative learning, technology-enhanced instruction, and independent study.
- Evaluate scientific literature and apply research findings to exercise programming and professional practice.

Behavioral and Professional Skills

Students must be able to:

- Demonstrate professionalism, responsibility, integrity, and accountability in all academic and experiential settings.
- Work collaboratively and respectfully with individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Accept constructive feedback and use it to improve performance.
- Demonstrate emotional maturity, adaptability, and appropriate behavior in changing or challenging situations.
- Be punctual, dependable, and prepared for all classes, laboratories, experiential learning activities, and internships.
- Follow established safety procedures and institutional policies in all learning environments.

Ethical Standards

Students must be able to:

- Demonstrate ethical behavior consistent with the standards of the exercise science profession.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of individuals encountered during coursework and experiential learning.
- Recognize the limits of their knowledge and abilities and seek guidance when appropriate.
- Conduct themselves with honesty, compassion, respect, cultural humility, and professionalism.
- Comply with all University policies and the expectations of experiential learning and internship sites.

Background Checks and Drug Screening

Some experiential learning, volunteer, observation, and internship sites may require students to complete criminal background checks, drug screening, immunization verification, CPR certification, or other onboarding requirements before participating at the site. These requirements are established by the host organization and are not determined by the Exercise Science Program.

Students are responsible for completing all site-specific requirements by the deadlines established by the experiential learning or internship site. Failure to satisfy a site's requirements may limit placement opportunities and could delay progression or completion of degree requirements.

Students are expected to comply with all University policies regarding professional conduct. Any legal or disciplinary issues that may affect participation in experiential learning or internship placements should be reported promptly to the Program Director so that appropriate guidance can be provided.

Classroom Etiquette

All students must adhere to professional standards of behavior when present in the learning environment.

- Always address faculty by their appropriate, professional title
- Be respectful in communications with fellow students, faculty, and staff
- Arrive in a timely manner
- Report any absence to the program
- Cell phones or other electronic devices capable of emitting sounds will be in silent mode during classes and need to be secured away during exams.
- Mute microphone and avoid distracting behaviors during online virtual sessions

Email Etiquette

Email is an important tool which will be utilized daily. All students are expected to adhere to professional standards of behavior when utilizing email.

- Always address an email with an appropriate salutation (“Dear Professor Jones”, “Dear Susan”)
- Always sign an email
- All emails should be written in a professional and appropriate manner with proper grammar and punctuation – in short, write nothing in an email which you would not be comfortable putting on the board in front of a class
- Be judicious when forwarding, replying, or copying additional people on emails
- All students are expected to check their Alvernia email at the beginning and end of each day
 - Respond to email correspondences within 24 business hours

Subject: Always Include the topic of your email in the subject line. E.g.: “Question about office hours”

Dear Professor/Dr. _____,

Your message should be written here using complete sentences and in a professional manner as outlined above.

Thank you (Or Other Valediction to close). Full

Signature: Jane/John Student, EXS

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the [Alvernia Honor Code](#) as outlined in the University Graduate Catalog.

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Exercise Science Program Handbook Acknowledgement and Attestation Page

As a student enrolled in the Exercise Science Program at Alvernia University, I acknowledge that I have received access to the following documents:

- The Alvernia University Exercise Science Program Handbook
- The Alvernia University Student Handbook
- The Alvernia University Undergraduate Catalog, including the academic policies and procedures applicable to undergraduate students

I understand that these documents contain important information regarding the policies, procedures, academic requirements, professional expectations, student responsibilities, and University resources that apply to my enrollment in the Exercise Science Program.

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

- I have read, or will read, the Exercise Science Program Handbook, the Alvernia University Student Handbook, and the academic policies contained in the Undergraduate Catalog.
- I understand that I am responsible for knowing and complying with the policies, procedures, academic standards, and expectations outlined in these documents.
- I understand that the Exercise Science Program Handbook supplements, but does not replace, the policies contained in the Alvernia University Student Handbook and Undergraduate Catalog.
- I understand that the Exercise Science Program and Alvernia University may revise policies, procedures, curriculum requirements, or other information described in these documents. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to remain informed of current policies and any published updates.
- I understand that if I have questions regarding the Exercise Science Program, its curriculum, progression requirements, or program-specific policies, I should first consult my academic advisor or the Exercise Science Program Director. If my questions relate to University policies, procedures, or services, my academic advisor or Program Director will, when appropriate, assist me in identifying and connecting with the appropriate University office or resource for further guidance.
- My signature indicates that I have had the opportunity to review these documents, ask questions, and seek clarification when needed. My signature acknowledges receipt and understanding of the information provided and my responsibility to comply with applicable Program and University policies. It does not waive any rights afforded to me under University policy or applicable law.

Student Name (Printed): _____

Student ID Number: _____

Academic Year: _____

Expected Graduation Year: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

This acknowledgement has been received by the Exercise Science Program.

Program Representative (Printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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