Dr Leighton Wells

Curriculum vitae

Lecturer, Sport and Exercise Science (Level B, Teaching Focused)
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Profile

I am a Teaching Fellow in exercise and sport science at Deakin University. In 2025 and 2026, I also held unit-chair responsibilities for two Victoria University units. Since 2022, my teaching has spanned eight Deakin units. It draws on a PhD in training load, coaching practice and communication, on coaching athletes in Australia and internationally, and on more than twenty years in industry.

Education

PhD, Sport Science, Deakin University

Completed December 2025 · Graduated February 2026

Thesis: Triathlon Coaching Practices: Optimising Training Load Processes and Communication.

Submitted in three years and 28 days. Three first-author peer-reviewed papers came from the doctorate.

> "I conclude that this thesis is an original scientific contribution that meets or exceeds international standards for the Doctor of Philosophy in sport science. I recommend its approval without reservation."
>
> Professor Stephen Seiler, University of Agder, independent doctoral examiner

Master of Applied Sport Science, Deakin University · 2022

Graduate Certificate of International Business, Deakin University · 2000

Graduate Certificate of Computing, Deakin University · 1999

Bachelor of Science (Biology), Deakin University · 1998

Academic and teaching experience

Teaching Fellow, Deakin University · 2025–present

Sessional Academic from 2022, including a full-time contract in T2 2025. Practical classes, seminars and marking across all three trimesters.

Units taught:

Unit	Title
HSE103	Exercise Prescription and Delivery
HSE104	Research Methods and Data Analysis in Exercise and Sport
HSE105	Principles of Sport Coaching
HBS109	Introduction to Anatomy and Physiology (from T1 2026)
HSE204	Motor Learning and Skill Acquisition (from T2 2026)
HSE208	Integrated Human Physiology
HSE302	Exercise Programming
HSE304	Physiology of Sport Performance

Additional marking: HSE102 Functional Human Anatomy · HSE110 Muscle Biology for Exercise Science · HSE727 Time and Motion Analysis of Sport Performance.

- **Student feedback.** Student evaluations recorded 100% positive ratings in HSE103, HSE105, HBS109, HSE208, HSE302 and HSE304. HSE208 recorded that result in T3 2025 and again in T2 2026.
- **Additional responsibility.** Provided short-notice cover in HSE304 and HSE103 in T2 2026. Allocated all Waurn Ponds HSE304 marking (AT1–4) in T2 2024.

Sessional Academic, Victoria University · 2025–2026 · intensive block model

- **Responsibilities.** Unit-chair duties for SSC2000 (2025) and AHE3114 (2026): unit news, student support, all marking, self-moderation and grade release. The AHE3114 duties covered the unit chair's leave.
- **SSC2000 Sport Coaching Systems and Technology.** Contributed to unit development. Proposed and delivered an endurance sport technology session from my research, including a practical TrainingPeaks training-week exercise. Student Evaluation of Teaching responses for 2025 were 100% "strongly agree" across all items.
- **AHE3114 Sport Physiology.** Both deliveries in Block 3, 2026 (28 September to 21 October), with workshop delivery and marking. The role included latitude to edit teaching content.

Research practice

Research Assistant, Deakin University · 2025–present

Resistance-training and altitude study: lifting-technique instruction and supervision; 3RM strength testing; participant recruitment; laboratory protocols; honours-student mentoring. Also writing the literature and scoping review as an invited co-author.

Research Assistant, Deakin University · 2023

Energy-expenditure accuracy of GPS sport watches, including sub-maximal VO_2 testing of recreational runners with a MetaLyzer on a clinical-grade treadmill.

Supervision, mentoring and engagement

- **Co-supervisor, Master of Applied Sport Science candidate, 2025.** The thesis examined menstrual-cycle symptoms and perceived performance in female triathletes and earned a High Distinction. A manuscript is in preparation.
- **Honours mentoring.** Current honours-student mentoring within the resistance-training and altitude study.
- **Coach mentoring.** Mentors early-career coaches in applied practice.
- **Open Day, Waurn Ponds, 2023–2025.** Demonstrated cycling training technology for prospective students.
- **Peer review.** Regularly invited to review manuscripts for the International Sport Coaching Journal, the International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, Frontiers in Sports and Active Living and Frontiers in Physiology.

Publications

Wells, L. A., et al. (2026). Training load and intensity in triathlon: objective differences between sex, age, race distance preference and training phase across a cohort of 95 age-group triathletes over six months. Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 8. https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2026.1798702

Wells, L. A., et al. (2026). An interpretive exploration of Australian triathlon coaching practices: working toward optimal training load practice within real-world contexts. International Sport Coaching Journal, 13(1), 58–69. https://doi.org/10.1123/iscj.2024-0093

Wells, L. A., et al. (2025). Differences between Australian triathlon coaching practices and evidence-based training load management recommendations. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 20(1), 92–101. https://doi.org/10.1177/17479541241305677

Wells, L., Konoval, T., & Bruce, L. (2023). An examination of how and why triathlon coaches use a suite of technologies in their practice. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 18(3), 687–694. https://doi.org/10.1177/17479541221144129

Under review, second-round revisions. Wells, L. A., et al. Optimising training load and communication practices in triathlon coaching: a pilot evidence-based education intervention. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching.

In preparation. Three papers on AI-assisted research methodology in sport science, with Professor Stephen Seiler, Professor Marco Cardinale and Palo Galko.

Doctoral thesis. Wells, L. (2026). Triathlon coaching practices: Optimising training load processes and communication [Doctoral thesis, Deakin University].

Research translation and presentations

- **TrainingPeaks Coach Blog.** Commissioned practitioner article: Age-Group Triathlon Training Load: What 34,731 Training Sessions Reveal, based on the 2026 Frontiers paper.
- **European College of Sport Science.** Doctoral research presented at the 30th Anniversary Congress, Rimini, 4 July 2025.
- **AusTriathlon and TrainingPeaks.** Invited presentations at the Queensland Academy of Sport, 6–7 December 2024, for development, performance and Olympic-level coaches.
- **AusTriathlon.** National webinar on training load and communication, 19 February 2025.

Applied practice

Owner and Head Coach, Summit Triathlon Coaching · 2023–present

Coaches athletes in Australia and internationally through remote coaching technology, across triathlon distances up to Ironman. About twenty years coaching, more than thirty years in triathlon and seven Ironman finishes.

Leadership, industry and partnerships

- **Founder and CEO, Pivot Summit, 2015–2019.** A regional technology and innovation event. Secured more than $1 million in sponsorship, including Deakin University's major sponsorship, negotiated with Vice-Chancellor Professor Jane den Hollander AO.

- **Co-founder, COO and Director, Runway, 2016–2017.** A startup incubator and accelerator that raised $1.25 million through the Victorian Government's LaunchVic program.
- **Co-founder, Regional Rising, Sep 2019–Apr 2022.** Contributed to STEM and digital-literacy education programs with regional partners, including STEM4Sunraysia.
- **Catapult, through Crux and Digitalsmith.** Crux, my marketing consultancy (2007–2013), created Catapult's original OptimEye and ClearSky identities. I then owned and ran Digitalsmith as Managing Director (2014–2016). Through Crux and then Digitalsmith, from 2012 to 2015, I led digital strategy, website work and acquisition-related due diligence for Catapult.
- **Earlier roles.** Marketing Director at Dexion, part of GUD Holdings. Director, Technology Geelong (formerly ICT Geelong). Product Manager at ADP Employer Services, responsible for Payline, which had a $23 million annual sales target. Earlier marketing and technical roles at Varian, GBC Scientific Equipment, OfficeMax and MYOB.
- **Partnership development.** Made a senior-level introduction between AusTriathlon and Deakin in 2025 to explore coach-education opportunities, then handed the discussion over with context on both sides.
- **Funding.** Secured and acquitted local, state and federal grants for education and innovation.

Qualifications and checks

- AusTriathlon Development Coach · TrainingPeaks Level 2 Coach
- Working with Children Check · Full Australian work rights · Current driver's licence

Referees

Available on request.