Physiotherapist Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency and Practice Placement Criteria

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Supporting CORU documentation

The following documents must be read in conjunction with each other by applicants for recognition of professional qualifications:

- The application form for recognition of international qualifications
- Guidance notes for recognition of international qualifications
- Standards of proficiency and criteria for practice placements

These documents can be downloaded from www.coru.ie

Background

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended) (HSCP Act, 2005) provides for the establishment of a Physiotherapists Registration Board, whose functions include establishing and maintaining a Register. Registration will allow a person to use the protected title.

The object of the Physiotherapists Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among Physiotherapists   registrants (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)).

Statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of physiotherapy and will ensure that members of the public are guided, protected and informed, so that they can be confident that physiotherapists providing services are properly regulated and qualified for the job.

This system of statutory regulation is designed to ensure professional conduct and the maintenance of high standards of professional education and training among physiotherapists, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector or are self-employed.

All applicants who hold professional qualifications gained outside the Republic of Ireland (ROI) must first have their qualification recognised by the Physiotherapists Registration Board before an application for registration can be made.

Standards of proficiency and Irish approved qualifications

One of the functions of the Physiotherapists Registration Board is to set the standards of proficiency for physiotherapists. The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards required for the safe and appropriate practice of the profession in Ireland. They are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional attributes for the safe practise of the profession. The standards of proficiency are the standards required for all entrants to the register.

Irish approved qualifications for entry to the register is at the following level:

- Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy at a National Framework Qualification of Level 8

The Physiotherapists Registration Board set standards for the delivery of education and training in Ireland for physiotherapists. It approves and monitor programmes against these standards. Graduates from an approved programme meet the Standards of Proficiency for Physiotherapy and are eligible to apply for registration. Please see the CORU website for the list of current approved Irish programmes.

Recognition of professional qualifications obtained outside Republic of Ireland

If you were awarded your qualification outside the (ROI) and are interested in working here you must firstly apply to the Physiotherapists Registration Board to have your qualification recognised. **You cannot apply for registration until your qualification is recognised.**

The Physiotherapists Registration Board is designated as the Competent Authority under European Union (EU) legislation - Directive 2005/36/EC for the purposes of recognition of professional qualifications for applicants from the European Economic Area (EEA).

A Competent Authority under EU legislation is any authority or body e.g. regulatory body or professional body empowered by the State to validate professional qualifications. The Registration Board may also recognise professional qualifications from outside the EEA.

For further detailed information about Directive 2005/36/EC log on to the European Commission website: www.ec.europa.eu. Please also read the CORU Guidance notes regarding application for recognition of international qualifications

Standards of proficiency

This section sets out the standards of proficiency required of graduates from an Irish approved programme for the safe and effective practice of the profession. They are the minimum standards necessary to protect the public and are required for entry to the Register.

They are also the standards of proficiency required of applicants with professional qualifications obtained outside ROI.

All applications for recognition of professional qualification (s) obtained outside of the ROI will be assessed against these standards of proficiency. Applicants must demonstrate to the Registration Board that their professional qualification(s) including any additional education and training and / or work experience gained in the profession meets the minimum standards of proficiency required. Evidence must be provided as part of the recognition application process.

The standards of proficiency explain the key obligations for a graduate in the profession and are accompanied by specific indicators, which provide more detail. The standards are highlighted in bold i.e. 2.1 with the specific indicators listed below them i.e. a, b, c…

These standards of proficiency are the intended learning outcomes which a professional qualification must meet. A diverse range of potential programmes and programme learning outcomes will be compatible with these standards.

The standards of proficiency are grouped under six domains:

Domain 1:   Professional autonomy and accountability

Domain 2:   Interpersonal and professional relationships

Domain 3:   Effective communication

Domain 4:   Personal and professional development

Domain 5:   Provision of quality services

Domain 6:   Knowledge, understanding and skills

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

1. **Practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession to the highest standard**

    a) Act in the best interest of service users at all times and within the boundaries of their profession

    b) Respect and, so far as possible, uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process

    c) Provide and articulate professional and ethical practice

    d) Practise in accordance with current legislation applicable to the work of physiotherapists

    e) Contribute to the development of effective, ethical and equitable policy and practice, regarding issues addressed by their profession

    f) Understand the implications of duty of care for service users and professionals

    g) Understand the principles of professional regulation and the provisions of the Physiotherapists' Registration Board *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*

    h) Manage themselves, their practice and that of others in accordance with the Physiotherapists' Registration Board *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*

2. **Practise in a non-discriminatory way**

    a) Acknowledge and respect beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups

    b) Promote equality and respect, without prejudice, and practise in a culturally competent, non-discriminatory and inclusive manner

    c) Assist in the promotion and implementation of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers with particular reference to the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

3.   Understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality

a)   Respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given

b)   Understand confidentiality within a team setting

c)   Understand the limits of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse

d)   Be aware of data protection, freedom of information and other relevant legislation

e)   Understand the responsibility and appropriate mechanisms/procedures in place to report breaches of care that are potentially harmful to service users

4.   Understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent

a)   Demonstrate competence in gaining informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions in line with the national/institutional policies

b)   Understand issues associated with informed consent with individuals with lack of capacity

c)   Maintain accurate records relating to consent

d)   Respect the rights of the service user, their families and carers

5.   Be able to exercise a professional duty of care/service

a)   Recognise personal responsibility for one's actions and be able to justify reasons for professional decisions made

b)   Understand the need to maintain the highest standards of personal/professional conduct

c)   Demonstrate awareness of and implement national and/or institutional policies and procedures in relation to, for example, health and safety, infection control guidelines and incident/near miss reporting

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

6. **Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

   a) Know the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice or refer to another professional

   b) Recognise the need for consultation with peers and other professionals and /or professional supervision or similar practices as appropriate to the profession

   c) Be able to assess a situation and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the situation

   d) Be able to initiate appropriate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative.

   e) Recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions

7. **Recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly**

   a) Understand the demands that are placed on the professional practitioner in a given field and the skills required to practise effectively with the workload and available resources

8. **Understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise**

   a) Understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice and demonstrate an evidence-based approach to treatment/management decision-making

   b) Understand the importance of maintaining their physical and mental health

   c) Understand the importance of keeping skills and knowledge up to date over a lifetime of practise

Domain 2: Interpersonal and professional relationships

Graduates will:

1. **Work, in partnership, with service users and their relatives/carers, and other professionals**

    a) Demonstrate capacity to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

    b) Demonstrate capacity to engage service users and carers in assessment and treatment/management decision-making to meet their needs and goals

    c) Recognise and understand the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users

    d) Refer to other professionals when appropriate and in a timely manner

2. **Contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of teams (multi-disciplinary, inter-professional, multi-service or inter-agency)**

    a) Demonstrate professional collaboration, consultation and decision making in multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-service and inter-agency teams

    b) Demonstrate an understanding that relationships with professional colleagues can impact on service delivery and therefore should be based on mutual respect and trust

    c) Demonstrate ability to maintain standards of care service in situations of personal incompatibility

Domain 3: Effective communication

Graduates will:

1. **Demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, listening, giving advice, instruction and professional opinion**

   a) Demonstrate communication skills that are appropriate to the interaction with service users and clients and be able to modify those communication behaviours to address and take account of factors such as gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status

   b) Demonstrate the ability to produce clear, concise and objective written communication and reports

   c) Be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, including listening skills, with service users and others

   d) Demonstrate an appropriate use of information technology

   e) Demonstrate effective communication with other colleagues (inter-disciplinary communication)

   f) Be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status

   g) Demonstrate the ability to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary in an appropriate and tailored format to enable them to make informed decisions

   h) Enlist the services of an interpreter or patient advocate to assist patients/clients/service users where necessary

2. **Understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user**

   a) Recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to facilitate the active participation of service users

   b) Effectively communicate with service users and demonstrate an ability to manage conflict and resistance

   c) Demonstrate competence in presenting professional judgements and information in a variety of contexts

Domain 4: Personal and professional development

Graduates will:

1. **Understand the role of reflective practice in relation to personal and professional development**

    a) Understand the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection

    b) Be able to reflect critically on personal practice and demonstrate changes in practice accordingly

    c) Ensure that personal life experiences and personal value systems do not impact inappropriately on one's decision making or actions

    d) Understand the role, purpose and function of peer consultation/support and mentoring and the importance of seeking and engaging in these practices

    e) Actively avail of opportunities for feedback, mentoring and support from colleagues in order to continuously improve personal practice

    f) Take responsibility for personal and professional development and maintaining standards of practice

    g) Develop and critically review an annual personal development plan which takes account of personal and professional needs

    h) Identify and avail of opportunities to promote professional development of self, colleagues and teams and the broader development of disciplines

    i) Participate in performance management as part of on-going professional development and effective service delivery

    j) Understand the role of continuing professional development and demonstrate commitment to life-long learning

    k) Recognise the need to contribute to policy and development of the profession

    l) Recognise the contribution and value of research in developing evidence-based/research-informed practice

Domain 5: Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

1. **Be able to identify and assess service users' needs**

   a) Be able to gather appropriate information from all relevant and appropriate sources

   b) Select and use appropriate assessment techniques: undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed history and physical assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment

   c) Undertake or arrange investigations with referral where appropriate

   d) Analyse and critically evaluate the information collected

2. **Formulate and deliver plans and strategies to meet identified needs of service users**

   a) Develop and implement appropriate treatment/management plans, interventions and strategies, in line with best available evidence, agreed national guidelines, protocols and pathways, where available

   b) Identify needs and resources required to implement effective management/intervention of plans

3. **Use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate action**

   a) Recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice

   b) Engage in evidence based/informed practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit/review procedures

   c) Be aware of a range of research and evaluative methodologies and their application in the content of evidence-based/informed practice

   d) Demonstrate sound clinical/professional decision-making, which can be justified even when made on the basis of limited information

   e) Demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving

4. **Draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements**

   a) Adjust/adapt their practice as needed to take account of new developments and up-to-date clinical research evidence

   b) Demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to the profession and to the clinical setting

Domain 5: Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

5. Formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

    a) Adapt clinical practice and communication styles to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors

6. Conduct appropriate assessment/diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully

    a) Maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care

    b) Empower service users to manage their well-being and recognise the need to provide education and advice to the patient/client/user on self-treatment, where appropriate

7. Implement best practice in record management

    a) Keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines

    b) Comply with current national documentation and abbreviation requirements

    c) Comply with current standards for documentation signature

8. Monitor and review the on-going effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly

    a) Gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data that help to evaluate the responses of service users to their interventions

    b) Continuously evaluate intervention plans using tools and recognised performance/outcome measures. Revise the plans as necessary, and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user

    c) Recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement of programmes

    d) Recognise important factors and risk management measures, learn from adverse events and be able to disseminate learning

    e) Make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions/techniques/courses of action and record decisions and reasoning

    f) Recognise contraindications to treatment and refer to the appropriate professionals

9. Be able to evaluate, audit, and review practise

a) Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement

b) Be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including the use of appropriate outcome measures

c) Monitor and evaluate performance by conducting regular audits and reviews in accordance with national guidelines/best practice and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews

d) Participate in quality assurance/quality improvement programmes and initiatives where appropriate

e) Understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection

f) Recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review and actively participate in multidisciplinary meetings where appropriate

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

1. **Know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to the profession**

   a) Demonstrate a critical understanding of the sciences fundamental to physiotherapy including the biomedical sciences of anatomy and physiology; pathology; the physical sciences such as biomechanics and behavioural sciences such as psychology, sociology and public health, together with a knowledge of health, disease, disorder dysfunction and health promotion

   b) Apply best-practice principles in the delivery of all treatment techniques and modalities, adhering to safety guidelines and practices in the use of all equipment and technological devices

   c) Demonstrate the application of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, literature searching and critical appraisal, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-based practice

   d) Demonstrate an understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to practise within the scope of physiotherapy

   e) Interpret and evaluate findings and document evidence of clinical reasoning

   f) Implement an evidence-based treatment/management plan and set appropriate goals in conjunction with the service user, their families and carers

   g) Demonstrate professional collaboration, consultation and decision making in multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-service and inter-agency teams

   h) Understand the theoretical basis of and the variety of approaches to assessment/diagnosis and intervention

   i) Manage and participate in the end of the patient care episode and participate in/lead the discharge planning process where appropriate

2. **Have knowledge and understanding of the skills and elements required to maintain service user, self and staff safety**

   a) Understand systems and impact of complexity on service user care

   b) Understand and be able to manage risk

   c) Be able to identify, prevent and manage adverse events and near misses and comply with national/institutional policies/frameworks for documentation and reporting mechanisms

   d) Understand the importance of communication with service users and staff to ensure patient safety

e) Demonstrate appropriate manual handling for self and patients; comply with the most recent national and international evidence and best-practice guidelines

f) Be aware of applicable legislation e.g. health and safety legislation, employment legislation and relevant national guidelines

g) Establish safe environments for practise, which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection prevention and control

h) Work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation

i) Undertake appropriate health and safety training

Practice placements

Criterion:

Practice placement learning enables the student to acquire the standards of proficiency for the profession and become safe, competent practitioners willing to accept personal and professional accountability for their work. Learning initially developed within the academic component of the profession must be integrated into practice through the experience and supervision offered by structured placements within professional settings.   A partnership approach between the education provider and the practice placement is essential. Practice placement education is an integral component of professional education and training programmes.

Indicators:

a) The programme must ensure that the physiotherapy student completes a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised clinical practice

b) The number, duration and range of practice placements are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the standards of proficiency. This must include placements in each of the core areas of musculoskeletal, neurological and cardiorespiratory physiotherapy

c) Evidence that students observe and gain experience of managing patients and conditions that occur across the lifespan

d) Evidence that students observe and gain experience of managing patients and conditions in a range of practice settings

e) The selection of practice placements provided by the education provider in conjunction with service agencies reflects the scope of the settings, including any statutory settings, in which the physiotherapist normally operates

f) The education provider will have a set of requirements for the selection of placements to ensure quality learning environments for students. The educator will work in partnership with the practice placement provider and will make a formal agreement that clearly sets out the responsibilities of both parties on an annual basis

g) On-going reviews of practice placements will ensure that placements provide a safe and supportive environment, high quality professional practice and opportunities for the student to experience direct contact with service users. Students, the Practice Education Team[*] and placement providers will have a role in this review process

h) Students, placement providers and practice education team will be fully informed of the expectations, organisation and arrangement of placements and the placement assessment processes

i) While on placement, students must be supervised by the practice educator with appropriate support from the practice education team. The level of supervision required should be determined by the student's skills, competence and educational needs

j) Practice educators will have relevant professional and academic qualifications, practice experience and competence in the area which they are supervising

k) The Education Provider will make support and training available to the practice education team, including the Practice Educator, to develop their practice education skills in relation to facilitating students on placement to ensure the quality of placement

l) Student allocation to practice placements is based on the need to integrate theory and practice and to facilitate the progressive development of the standards of proficiency for the profession. The standards of proficiency are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional qualities that are required of graduates from an approved programme for the safe and appropriate practice of the profession. They are the minimum standards for entry to the profession. The standards of proficiency learnt in this way should be transferable between situations, contexts and institutions

m) Pre-placement requirements must be in place including garda clearance insurance and occupational health procedures along with details of pre-placement mandatory training e.g. manual handling, infection prevention/control etc.

n) Policies and procedures are in place for the assessment (formative and summative) of students on practice placements, including appeal mechanisms for failed placements

o) A code of conduct for students whilst on placement is in place