



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health
Social Care Professionals

Physiotherapists Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency for Physiotherapists

Bord Clárchúcháin na bhFisiteiripeoirí
Physiotherapists Registration Board

About this Document

CORU is a multi-profession regulator. The role of CORU is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

This document sets out the Physiotherapists Registration Board Standards of Proficiency for Physiotherapists.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Physiotherapists Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes
- Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes: Information for Education Providers
- Programme Information Guidelines for Education and Training Providers

Freedom of Information and Data Protection

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council and its records are subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2004.

Any personal data received by CORU will be used for the purpose of programme approval and monitoring and shared with those involved in these processes

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Introduction

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (HSCP Act, 2005) provides for the establishment of Registration Boards to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. Entry onto the register allows a person to use the title of that profession. This system of statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of professional services. The objective of the statutory registration system is to protect, guide and inform the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals are properly regulated and qualified for the job whether they work in the public or private sectors or are self-employed.

The objective of the Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

- › The **approval** of education and training programmes (Section 48) – this allows a Registration Board to determine if it is satisfied that a programme which applies for approval is suitable for the education and training of candidates for registration in its register.
- › The **monitoring** of approved programmes (Section 49) – this allows a Registration Board to satisfy itself as to the continuing suitability of the education, training, assessment and examination, and clinical training and experience provided by any education and training programme approved by the Board.

Regulatory approval of a programme by a Registration Board is distinct from academic accreditation. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme associated with a given qualification consistently and effectively prepares graduates for entry on to the register of that profession. To receive approval a programme must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Registration Board.

There are two types of requirements:

- › **Standards of proficiency** are the threshold standards set by the Registration Board for entry to the register. The standards of proficiency provide detail on the knowledge and skills that all graduates must possess at entry to the register.
- › **Criteria for education and training programmes** are the set of requirements set by the Registration Board related to how a professional education and training programme is designed and managed. The criteria are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for the profession.

Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that individuals must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the registration board at the level of entry to practice. They are not standards for practice after entry to the register. Rather they offer a snapshot of the standards at entry to the register.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for Physiotherapists under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for entry to the register. These criteria form the Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed. The criteria are detailed in a separate document called the Physiotherapists Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes.

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet all of the Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet all of the required standards of proficiency.

A programme which meets the required criteria and standards of proficiency for entry to the register is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. Graduates possessing an approved qualification are eligible to apply for entry to the Physiotherapists Register. The programme will then be subject to monitoring.

If a programme is not approved, the associated qualification will not be listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

Monitoring is a requirement of all approved programmes and is conducted not less than once every five years. Qualifications may be removed from the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law if the associated programme does not meet the Board's requirements under monitoring. Students graduating from a programme not listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law are not eligible to apply for entry to the Physiotherapists Register.

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

Graduates will:

1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession
2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional
3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference
4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure
5. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process
6. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care
7. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession issued by the Registration Board
8. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups
9. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers
10. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given
11. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting
12. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse
13. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation
14. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing
15. Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained
16. Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity
17. Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made
18. Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate

19. Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources
20. Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Team working

Graduates will:

1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user
2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs
3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns
4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-treatment, where appropriate
5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required
6. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation
7. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession
8. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements
9. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the boundaries of confidentiality
10. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice
11. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management
12. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals, treatments and interventions and be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users
13. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
14. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting
15. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

3. Safety and Quality

Graduates will:

1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs
2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment
3. Be able to determine the appropriate tests/assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests
4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process
5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals
6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments
7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/ outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user
9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or audit the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews
10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns
11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement
12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current legislation/guidelines
13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and guidelines
14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection prevention and control strategies

4. Professional Development

Graduates will:

1. Be able to engage in and take responsibility for professional development
2. Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice
3. Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on one's own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice
4. Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately
5. Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice
6. Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the profession
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant biological sciences including human development, social and behavioural sciences and other related sciences, together with a knowledge of health and wellbeing including, disease, disorder and dysfunction
3. Understand normal human anatomy and physiology, including the dynamic relationships of human structure and function as it relates to the neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular and respiratory systems and be able to describe how physiotherapy can affect physiological, structural and behavioural change
4. Understand the principles and theories of biomechanics, applied exercise science, ergonomics and neuroscience as they relate to physiotherapy and how these inform the understanding and analysis of human movement and function
5. Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice
6. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including translation of theory, concepts and methods to clinical/professional practice
7. Understand the physiological, structural, pathological, behavioural and functional changes associated with conditions commonly treated in physiotherapy in a range of settings; be able to discuss and identify the associated clinical features related to these changes and the changes that can result from physiotherapy intervention and disease progression
8. Understand the role of physiotherapy in enhancing functional ability in a range of acute and chronic conditions in a variety of settings across the lifespan
9. Be able to use manual handling skills appropriately; be able to identify the need for and be able to use aids for manual handling in a variety of practice settings
10. Be able to assess a range of acute and chronic conditions in the areas of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurological physiotherapy practice using subjective questioning, observation skills, specific assessment tools and techniques, appropriate palpation and handling skills
11. Be able to use and justify differential diagnosis appropriately in practice to identify potential diagnoses and prognosis prior to initiating an intervention
12. Be able to use triage skills to determine an appropriate path of care
13. Be able to conduct an assessment of posture; a basic assessment of gait and be able to participate in a biomechanical assessment; and understand the role of these assessments in the management of a range of acute and chronic conditions in musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurology practice

14. Be able to assess and treat individuals across the lifespan with complex presentations resulting from multi-morbidity in the areas of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurological physiotherapy practice
15. Be able to discuss and describe the red flags associated with a range of musculoskeletal, neurological and respiratory conditions; understand the importance of identifying these and be able to identify the suitable referral pathway
16. Understand the importance of identifying psychosocial flags in a range of settings; be able to discuss the impact of these on recovery and be able to describe appropriate interventions to overcome these with service users across the lifespan
17. Understand the role of standardised, valid outcome measures in physiotherapy practice and be able to select, justify and use a range of reliable outcome measures in the areas of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurological physiotherapy practice
18. Be able to design, justify and implement treatment plans across a range of practice settings that are appropriate to the service user's needs, evidence informed and address the findings of the assessment process
19. Be able to safely deliver a variety of treatment techniques and modalities including the use of physiotherapy equipment and devices and know, understand and be able to identify contraindications and precautions associated with treatments, interventions and modalities in a variety of physiotherapy settings
20. Understand the purpose of movement rehabilitation and be able to select, prescribe and implement appropriate movement-based interventions that addresses disorder and disability with service users across the lifespan in a variety of settings
21. Be able to safely use a variety of manual therapy techniques to treat a range of acute and chronic musculoskeletal conditions across the lifespan
22. Be able to select, prescribe and implement appropriate airway clearance techniques for a range of cardiorespiratory conditions across the lifespan
23. Be able to prescribe, monitor and advance both therapeutic and functional exercise in the areas of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurology physiotherapy practice and for the promotion of health and well-being across the lifespan; be able to construct specific exercise programmes in collaboration with service users individually and in groups and be able to educate service users about exercise to encourage self-management.
24. Be able to participate in the discharge planning process
25. Understand the role of the physiotherapist in checking the safety of equipment and devices and be able to provide guidance to service users regarding the safe use of equipment or devices prescribed for their use at home
26. Understand the role of the physiotherapist in supporting health and lifestyle behaviour change; be able to discuss the principles of health promotion and be able to describe the stages of behaviour change
27. Be able to identify and understand the impact of organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on health and social care provision

- 28.** Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of practical, technical and clinical skills associated with the different concepts and approaches used in musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurology physiotherapy practice
- 29.** Demonstrate ability to participate in or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research
- 30.** Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision



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