



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Physiotherapists
Registration
Board

Physiotherapists Registration Board

Requirements for Education and Training Providers
offering Referral for Radiological Diagnostic
Procedures Education and Training Programmes

Bord Clárchúcháin na bhFisiteiripeoirí
Physiotherapists Registration Board

About the Physiotherapists Registration Board

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

CORU was established under the *Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)*. It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and Registration Boards, each of which manages the registration of members of the profession or professions it has responsibility for.

The Physiotherapists Registration Board was established in May 2014. The Physiotherapists Register was opened on 30 September 2016 and the titles 'physiotherapist' and 'physical therapist' became legally protected titles on 30 September 2018.

The Physiotherapists Registration Board has the statutory responsibility for:

- ▶ establishing and maintaining the Register of Physiotherapists;
- ▶ assessing, approving and monitoring education and training programmes awarded in the State for entry onto the Physiotherapists Register;
- ▶ assessing and recognising qualifications gained outside the State in order to determine whether they meet Irish threshold requirements; and
- ▶ establishing the Code of Conduct of Professional Conduct and Ethics to which all registered physiotherapists and physical therapists must adhere.

Freedom of Information and Data Protection

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council is subject to the Freedom of Information 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.

Contents

Introduction	4
Requirements for Education Providers	6
Standards of Competence	6
Approval and Monitoring of Programmes	7
Supporting CORU Documentation	7
Requirements for Education Providers	
Criterion 1: Programme Design and Delivery	8
Criterion 2: Assessment	8
Criterion 3: Programme Governance, Management and Quality Assurance	9
Glossary	10

Introduction

In July 2023, the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, announced a policy decision to enable physiotherapists to refer for diagnostic radiological procedures that involve exposure to ionising radiation.

Extensive and detailed legislative requirements are in operation concerning the exposure to ionising radiation for the safety and protection of service users, practitioners and the public more generally. The European Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom Basic Safety Standards (BSS) establishes the basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to medical ionising radiation. These requirements were transposed into Irish Law by two separate statutory instruments:

- ▶ Statutory Instrument 30/2019: Radiological Protection Act 1991 (Ionising Radiation) Regulations 2019 which details requirements around protections for workers and the public, establishing responsibility with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring (ORM); and
- ▶ Statutory Instrument 256/2018: Basic Safety Standards for Protection Against Dangers Arising from Medical Exposure to Ionising Radiation which details requirements around protections for patients and gives responsibility for this to the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

In establishing the role of physiotherapist referrer which will involve the exposure to ionising radiation, there is particular concern around ensuring public protection. As such, the designation of appropriately trained physiotherapists to act as referrers requires regulatory oversight to set the standard of competence for the practice of referring. This is the responsibility of the Physiotherapists Registration Board.

Standards of Proficiency and Physiotherapist Referral

The *Standards of Proficiency for Physiotherapists* – set by the Physiotherapists Registration Board – articulate the threshold level knowledge, skills and professional behaviours required for entry into practice as a physiotherapist in Ireland. Education and Training Programmes, in designing their physiotherapy programmes for which they are seeking the Registration Board’s approval, must ensure that all graduates meet the Standards in order to enter onto the register. The Standards are also used to assess qualifications awarded outside the State presented by international applicants. This ensures that all those seeking registration to practise physiotherapy meet the same threshold standards of proficiency.

A copy of the *Standards of Proficiency for Physiotherapists* is available [here](#).

The *Standards of Proficiency* are not used as standards of practice after entry to the register. Rather, they set the requirements for threshold entry onto the register.

Having reviewed its *Standards of Proficiency*, the Physiotherapists Registration Board determined that the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours required of physiotherapists to act as referrers were not part of the threshold standards for entry into general physiotherapy practice. As such, for practitioners to act as referrers they must undertake **additional education and training**.

To this end, and to ensure physiotherapists are trained and have the competence to act as a referrer, the Physiotherapists Registration Board has set its education and training requirements for physiotherapist referral for radiological procedures. There are two types of requirements:

- ▶ *Standards of Competence for Referral for Radiological Diagnostic Procedures:* these articulate the knowledge, skills and behaviours that a registrant must demonstrate on completion of an education and training programme specific to the practice of physiotherapist referral for radiological diagnostic procedures; and
- ▶ *Requirements for Education and Training Providers offering Physiotherapist Referral for Radiological Diagnostic Procedures Education and Training Programmes:* these identify the curriculum, assessment and quality assurance requirements an education provider must meet with regard to how its physiotherapist referral for radiological diagnostic procedures education and training programme is designed and managed to ensure that all graduates meet the *Standards of Competence*.

Both the *Standards of Competence* and *Requirements for Education and Training Providers* are kept under review by the Physiotherapists Registration Board to ensure their continued suitability and appropriateness in setting the threshold standard for entry into practice as a physiotherapist referrer for procedures involving exposure to ionising radiation. Any changes proposed to the *Standards* and/or *Requirements* will be subject to a public stakeholder consultation process and following any changes that are approved by the Physiotherapists Registration Board, education providers will be given a sufficient period of time to align education and training programmes to any changes.

This document sets out the *Requirements for Education and Training Providers offering Physiotherapist Referral for Radiological Diagnostic Procedures Education and Training Programmes*.

Requirements for Education Providers

The Requirements for Education Providers offering Physiotherapist Referral for Radiological Diagnostic Procedures Education and Training Programmes are used in conjunction with the Standards of Competence.

The Requirements ensure that the education provider has the quality assurance systems and mechanisms in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the Standards of Competence. The Requirements detail how education and training programmes are to be designed, organised and managed.

The Physiotherapists Registration Board has set requirements in relation to:

1. Programme Design and Delivery
2. Assessment
3. Programme Governance, Management and Quality Assurance

Under each of these overarching criteria, there are specific requirements articulated – known as enabling requirements – which, when taken together, articulate how achievement of the overarching criterion must be demonstrated.

Standards of Competence

The *Standards of Competence* detailed in this document identify the **additional areas of knowledge and skill** required of physiotherapists who are seeking to become physiotherapist referrers. The knowledge and skill areas already articulated in the *Standards of Proficiency* and the *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics* are not restated in this document. It is for this reason that these *Standards of Competence* must be read alongside both the *Standards of Proficiency* and the *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*.

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Education providers seeking to design and deliver an education and training programme to train physiotherapists to act as referrers for radiological diagnostic procedures will be required to seek approval of their programme by the Physiotherapists Registration Board in line with Section 27(1) of the *Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)*.

An education and training programme that has been assessed by the Physiotherapists Registration Board and is determined to have met all the *Requirements for Education Providers* which ensures that all graduates have achieved all the Standards of Competence is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

More information on the approval and monitoring process is available [here](#).

Supporting CORU Documentation

This document should be read alongside the following documentation:

- ▶ *Standards of Proficiency for Physiotherapists*
- ▶ *Physiotherapists Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*
- ▶ *Standards of Competence for Referral for Radiological Diagnostic Procedures*

Criterion 1

Programme Design and Delivery

Programme design and delivery enable students to achieve the standards of competence required for referral for radiological procedures.

- 1.1** The standards of competence must be embedded in the design of the curriculum.
 - 1.2** The curriculum is evidence-informed and relevant to current practice.
 - 1.3** The programme ensures that each student completes supervised clinical practice, including no less than 10 supervised episodes of referral, to support achievement of the standards of competence.
 - 1.4** The learning and teaching approaches and the clinical practice settings used are appropriate to the effective delivery of the standards of competence.
 - 1.5** The programme ensures that students are supervised and supported during practice experiences.
 - 1.6** There are effective oversight and communication arrangements in place between the education provider and practice experience sites.
 - 1.7** Students, practice experience providers and supervisors are fully prepared and informed of the expectations of supervised clinical practice.
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Criterion 2

Assessment

Assessment is fair, valid and reliable to ensure successful students meet the standards of competence required for referral for radiological procedures.

- 2.1** The assessment strategy ensures that a student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of competence.
- 2.2** Assessment methods are appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the achievement of the standards of competence.
- 2.3** Students, educators and practice experience supervisors understand the assessments employed in the programme, requirements for progression and procedures for non-progression.

Criterion 3

Programme Governance, Management and Quality Assurance

Programme governance, management and quality assurance processes are effective in delivering a sustainable, high quality programme.

- 3.1** The admissions process ensures that appropriate entry criteria are met.
- 3.2** There are effective systems in place for regular and systematic monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement of the programme, which include the appointment of at least one external examiner.
- 3.3** There are effective arrangements in place which ensure all relevant stakeholders contribute to the programme's design, management and quality improvement.
- 3.4** There are appropriate and sufficient resources to support students in achieving the standards of competence.
- 3.5** The person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified, experienced and registered with the appropriate statutory regulator in the State.
- 3.6** Educators and practice supervisors have qualifications, knowledge and expertise relevant to their roles in teaching, supervising and/or assessing students, and are registered with the appropriate statutory regulator in the State.
- 3.7** Attendance requirements for the programme are identified, communicated to students and monitored, with action taken when they are not met.
- 3.8** There is an effective process for students to raise concerns about the programme.

Glossary

Curriculum	The design, content and delivery of modules that combined comprise the planned learning opportunities offered to students on an education and training programme.
Education provider	The institution that offers an education and training programme and which control key aspects of the programme including admissions, curriculum delivery, quality management, placement management and assessment.
Educators	People employed or engaged by an education provider who are involved in teaching, supervising and/or assessing students in the taught environment.
Practice Experience Supervisors	People who are based at the clinical practice site and are responsible for teaching, supervising and/or assessing students during the period of clinical practice.
Clinical Practice	A period of clinical experience that forms part of a programme.
Resources	The physical and human resources available to students to support the achievement of the standards of proficiency.
Service user	A person who uses or is affected by the services of registrants or students.
Standards of Competence	The knowledge, skills and professional capabilities for practice in an area of professional specialism that a registrant must have following completion of the appropriate education and training programme.



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