

Physiotherapist practice specialisation

Policy statement

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World Physiotherapy supports member organisations' leadership and advocacy to influence national policies on practice specialisation, where such activity is considered by them to benefit the public and the profession by promoting high standards of physiotherapy. In line with the World Physiotherapy policy statement on advanced physiotherapy practice, practice specialisation needs to be distinguished from advanced practice. While physiotherapists who are advanced practitioners are normally specialists; specialist physiotherapists may not be advanced practitioners. (1)

World Physiotherapy wishes to harmonise and co-ordinate the development of practice specialisation by adopting consistent principles, definitions and guidelines.

World Physiotherapy advocates that member organisations should encourage and support the following.

- The qualification of a physiotherapist specialist includes a formal process for testing and acknowledging in-depth clinical knowledge and skills of the speciality with the expectation that the formal process is fully documented.
- A physiotherapist demonstrates in-depth clinical competence in their speciality by obtaining formal recognition of his/her knowledge and skills through a member organisation or accredited agent.
- Specialisation is not to be considered, or implied, to mean a limitation on practice. The field of activity recognised as physiotherapy will remain open to all appropriately qualified physiotherapists, both specialist and non-specialist, practising within their respective levels of competence.

Glossary (<https://world.physio/resources/glossary>)

Advanced practice

Specialisation

Specialist physiotherapist

Accreditation

Approval, review and related policy information	
Date adopted:	Originally approved at the 13th General Meeting of WCPT June 1995. Revised and re-approved at the 16th General Meeting of WCPT June 2007. Revised and re-approved at the 17th General Meeting of WCPT June 2011. Revised and re-approved at the 18th General Meeting of WCPT May 2015. Revised and re-approved at the 19th General Meeting of WCPT May 2019. Revised and re-approved at the 20 th General Meeting of WCPT May 2023.
Date for review:	2027
Related World Physiotherapy policies:	World Physiotherapy policy statements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Description of physiotherapy• Advanced physiotherapy practice

References

1. World physiotherapy. Policy statement: Advanced physiotherapy practice. London, UK: World Physiotherapy; 2019 [24 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://world.physio/policy/ps-advanced-pt-practice>.

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