

Physical therapist practice specialisation

Policy statement

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The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) 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 physical therapy. In line with the WCPT policy statement on advanced physical therapy practice, practice specialisation needs to be distinguished from advanced practice. While physical therapists who are advanced practitioners are normally specialists; specialist physical therapists may not be advanced practitioners. ¹

WCPT wishes to harmonise and co-ordinate the development of practice specialisation by adopting consistent principles, definitions and guidelines. ²

WCPT advocates that member organisations should encourage and support the following.

- The qualification of a physical therapist 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 physical therapist 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 physical therapy will remain open to all appropriately qualified physical therapists, both specialist and non-specialist, practising within their respective levels of competence.

Glossary (www.world.physio/resources/glossary)

Advanced practice

Specialisation

Specialist physical therapist

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.
Date for review:	2023
Related WCPT policies:	WCPT policy statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Description of physical therapy• Advanced physical therapy practice WCPT guideline: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guideline for physical therapist practice specialisation

References

1. World Confederation for Physical Therapy. Policy statement: Advanced physical therapy practice. London, UK: WCPT; 2019. www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-advanced-pt-practice (3 June 2019)
2. World Confederation for Physical Therapy. Policy statement: Physical therapist practice specialisation. London, UK: WCPT; 2019. www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-specialisation (Access date 5 September 2019)

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