

EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS AND QUALIFICATIONS ASSESSMENT FOR PHYSIOTHERAPISTS EDUCATED OUTSIDE OF CANADA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about the Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment (sometimes called “credentialing”). The Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy¹ Regulators (The Alliance) has developed it to meet the needs of a wide range of readers, including applicants and interested members of the public. A glossary of terms used in this document is provided at the end.

¹ Physiotherapy, physiotherapist, physical therapy, physical therapist, physiothérapeute, PT and pht are official marks used with permission. In this document, the term *physical therapy* means the same thing as *physiotherapy*, and *physical therapist* means the same thing as *physiotherapist*.



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PURPOSE

1. What is the purpose of the assessment?

We developed the Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment to help us determine if applicants are eligible to write the Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE).

2. What does the assessment aim to accomplish?

The assessment aims to ensure that applicants hold authentic academic credentials and qualifications that are substantially equivalent to the minimum educational requirements for a Canadian-educated physiotherapist. It does so by determining whether applicants meet the national credentialing standards set by The Alliance Board of Directors.

The assessment verifies the following:

- That an applicant completed a primary and secondary education that allows for entrance to university-level education
- That an applicant's professional physiotherapy education is at university level (for example, bachelor's level or *entry-level* master's programs)
- That an applicant graduated from an accredited/recognized/approved physiotherapy program
- That an applicant completed a university-level education program that included knowledge and skills that meet the minimum levels for Canadian-educated physiotherapists
- That an applicant, through academic and clinical education, is eligible to work as a physiotherapist in the country where they completed their physiotherapy education
- That an applicant completed university-level education or supervised clinical education that reflects the need for autonomous, safe, effective and ethical practice within the Canadian health context
- That an applicant is proficient in either English or French

3. What does “substantially equivalent” mean?

It means that we are reasonably confident that an applicant's education and qualifications are essentially similar to those of a Canadian-educated physiotherapist. The credentialing process is a fair and accurate assessment of an applicant's educational credentials and qualifications for the purpose of determining eligibility for the Physiotherapy Competency Exam (PCE).

- A “successful” result on the Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment means that the applicant has met the minimum credentialing standard and can write the PCE.
- An “unsuccessful” result means that the applicant has not yet met the minimum credentialing standard, but can apply for the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program (see question #95).



- A “no mechanism” result means that the applicant does not meet the minimum credentialing standard and cannot apply for the PLAR program. The Alliance does not have a program that can help them meet the standards.

4. What role does the assessment play for provincial and territorial physiotherapy regulators?

In Canada, the regulator in Yukon territory and all other provincial regulatory bodies (except Québec) have outsourced their assessment and examination activities to The Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators (The Alliance). Go to [our website](#) for a list of Canadian provincial and territorial physiotherapy regulatory bodies. Eleven provincial and territorial physiotherapy regulators from across Canada are members of The Alliance, with regulatory status of physiotherapists described by legislation.

We have expertise in applying fair, reliable and valid assessment processes. Our assessment and examination processes provide a national benchmark that meets components of the provinces’ and territories’ registration requirements and helps physiotherapists become licensed across the country.

We do not make decisions about who can and cannot become licensed to practise as a physiotherapist in provinces and territories. We only provide information on assessment results to the physiotherapy regulators. It is up to the regulators to make decisions about who is and who is not eligible to practise.

STANDARDS — RULES

5. How does The Alliance set the credentialing standards?

We set the credentialing standards by analyzing, through a comprehensive process, the physiotherapy education offered across the country in 14 accredited Canadian physiotherapy educational programs. Go to [our website](#) to view the list of accredited programs.

6. What is the process for setting the standards?

First, we survey the 14 accredited Canadian physiotherapy programs to determine the minimum coursework and clinical education required by these programs. We also ask for input from the Accreditation Council for Canadian Physiotherapy Academic Programs (ACCPAP), the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA), experts in linguistics, and experts in educational credentials assessment such as the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) or the World Education Service (WES).

Next, we benchmark the credentialing program’s criteria again to reflect physiotherapy education (including clinical education) in Canada. We then develop the standards in close collaboration with university programs and The Alliance Evaluation Services Committee. We present the proposed program standards to the Board of Directors for review and approval before we start to use them.

7. How often does The Alliance review or revise the standards?

We review the standards regularly and make changes based on the findings of research activities. We complete a comprehensive review at least every five (5) years.



We have offered credentialing services since 1992. To date, we have completed four comprehensive reviews: Best Practices I (1995), Best Practices II (1997), Best Practices III (2002) and Best Practices IV (2007).

8. When was the last time The Alliance revised the standards, and how were they revised?

We began to use the most recent revised standards on January 1, 2008.

The Best Practices IV Project began in June 2006. A detailed program review focused on re-benchmarking the Canadian standard using the current physiotherapy educational program information. We reviewed the program information to compare program requirements (pre-requisites; individual course requirements including content, hours and credits) to the current credentialing standards.

The Board of Directors approved the recommendations for changes to the standards at their May 2007 meeting. We began to use these standards on January 1, 2008.

We have started reviewing our standards, policies and procedures again in July 2010. We have hired external consultants to do this. We will submit the full report including recommendations for changes to the Board of Directors in May 2011.

9. What is “new” about the 2008 version of the credentialing standards?

The 2008 standards reflect some small changes in coursework requirements among Canadian physiotherapy programs. One major change was the removal of the requirement for three to four years of physiotherapy education from the standards. The new standards (2008) require applicants to have completed a university-level education in physiotherapy and to have received a credential in physiotherapy from a recognized educational institution that offers university-level education in physiotherapy. The physiotherapy education must be at entry-level. We introduced the requirement for all applicants to provide evidence of prior learning or complete coursework related to physiotherapy practice in the Canadian health context in 2003, and it is still required.

Fourteen universities offer recognized physiotherapy programs in Canada. While most of these programs require a bachelor's degree or a certain number of university-level credits for admission, some programs still offer a four-year degree program in physiotherapy. The Canadian physiotherapy program credits range from 66 credits (excluding clinical practice) to 165 credits.

We do not require internationally educated applicants to complete a bachelor's degree before they receive their physiotherapy education. We also do not require them to have a master's degree in physiotherapy. An internationally educated applicant must have completed university-level education in physiotherapy and must have obtained an academic credential in physiotherapy. Their physiotherapy education must be at entry level. For example, an applicant who completed a four-year physiotherapy program or a three-year university-level program, then enrolled in an entry-level physiotherapy program, and then obtained her or his physiotherapy degree or (a diploma equivalent to a degree) from that program, will be eligible to apply for an assessment if the physiotherapy program was at university level.



10. Do you require applicants to have a master's degree in physiotherapy?

We do not require internationally educated applicants to complete a bachelor's degree before they receive their physiotherapy education. We also do not require them to have a master's degree in physiotherapy. An internationally educated applicant must have completed university-level education in physiotherapy and must have obtained an academic credential in physiotherapy. Their physiotherapy education must be at entry level. For example, an applicant who completed a four-year physiotherapy program or a three-year university-level program, then enrolled in an entry-level physiotherapy program, and then obtained her or his physiotherapy degree or (a diploma equivalent to a degree) from that program, will be eligible to apply for an assessment if the physiotherapy program was at university level.

11. How do I meet the requirements for physiotherapy practice in the Canadian health context?

You can do coursework either in Canada or outside of Canada, or you can provide evidence that you have had a supervised Canadian clinical placement as part of your physiotherapy education. Many courses are available. Some of the Canadian universities offer online courses or classroom-based courses in this area. We have also developed a self-study module on Context of Physiotherapy Practice in Canada.

We do not require that you have work experience. However, if you have completed your physiotherapy education and have already worked after your graduation or are currently working in Canada as a physiotherapy assistant, a physiotherapy aide or a physiotherapy support worker, and you work or worked under the supervision of a registered physiotherapist for at least three months full time, we will consider your work experience. The work must have been **paid** employment, not volunteer work. We will contact your supervisor and ask him or her to complete a questionnaire. We will review the questionnaire and determine if you still need to take a course to meet this requirement.

You do not need to complete a course to meet this requirement when you apply for credentialing. Because we do not know what courses or clinical placements you have completed before you apply, we will review your application and your transcripts first. We will then send you information about this requirement and your options for fulfilling it.

12. I am a refugee and I cannot obtain all relevant documentation. Does The Alliance have procedures in place to help me apply for credentialing?

Yes, we have procedures to help you. If you are a refugee or you cannot provide documentation for other reasons, please contact our Client Services Coordinator by phone at (416) 234-8800 extension 30 or by email at csc@alliancept.org. We can help you prepare your application and tell you what you can do to apply for credentialing.

13. How does The Alliance decide that an applicant is not eligible to become registered or licensed?

The Alliance is not a regulator of physiotherapy. We do **not** make decisions about who can and cannot become licensed to practise as a physiotherapist in provinces and territories. We provide information on credentials and qualifications results to the



physiotherapy regulators. It is up to the regulators to decide who is and who is not eligible to practise.

The regulators' role is to protect the public. Regulators do this through various processes, including determining registration requirements. Some regulators in Canada require candidates to successfully complete the Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE) to become registered. Some regulators allow candidates to work under temporary certificates of registration while they are waiting to complete the PCE. Some regulators ask that applicants pre-register with them before applying for an assessment.

At present, the Yukon territory and all provinces except Québec require all physiotherapists educated outside of Canada to take the PCE in order to be eligible for licensing. Anyone who received their physiotherapy education outside of Canada and who wants to be eligible to take the PCE must first complete The Alliance's Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment process.

14. Can you evaluate my credentials if I would like to work in Québec or Nunavut or Northwest Territories?

- Any applicant who wants to apply for registration in the province of Québec must contact l'Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec.
- Any applicant who wants to apply for registration to practise as a physiotherapist in Nunavut or Northwest Territories must contact the territorial health department or the prospective employer in those territories.
- The College of Physiotherapists of Ontario (CPO) recommends that applicants who want to apply for registration to practise in Ontario pre-register with CPO before beginning the mandatory processes with the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators. Although pre-registration is optional, the College highly recommends it.
- Canada is a bilingual (English and French) country, but not all provinces and territories are bilingual. Therefore, some provincial and territorial regulators will not let you become licensed or registered if you are not fluent in the official language of that province or territory. When you find out the requirements of the regulator in the province or territory in which you want to practise, make sure you find out which language they require you to be fluent in to become licensed or registered.

See [our website](#) for a list of the Canadian physiotherapy regulators.

15. Does The Alliance have assessment processes that I can begin in my home country?

We have assessment processes that you can begin in your home country. In fact, we highly recommend that potential applicants begin the process in their home countries. If we identify minor gaps in your credentials, you will be able to fill these gaps in your home country.

The assessment process can take a long time. Sometimes we need to do more research before we can make a decision. In our experience, once we have told applicants what their deficiencies are, it is easier for them to obtain additional information while they are in their home countries. Also, if we reject an application because an applicant has a major deficiency, the applicant will have all the



information they need to decide what his or her next step will be. For example, if we determine that an applicant is missing only a few courses, the applicant has the option of fulfilling this requirement in his or her home country.

16. Since I was educated outside of Canada, do I have to meet requirements to become licensed or registered that candidates educated in Canada do not need to meet?

Licensing and registration requirements for internationally educated candidates are the same as those for Canadian-educated candidates. To become licensed or registered to practise as a physiotherapist in Canada, all candidates must fulfill all of the requirements of the regulator in the province or territory in which they want to practise. Internationally educated candidates need to meet only the minimum requirements. Candidates must be fluent in English or French (depending on the province), and in most provinces and territories, they must pass the Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE). To be eligible to take the PCE, all candidates must meet the same standards. In other words, internationally educated candidates must have educational credentials and qualifications that are substantially equivalent to those of Canadian-educated candidates.

17. I heard that The Alliance has special documentation for applicants from certain countries. Is this true? Which countries fall in this category?

Based upon research and confirmation received from the ministries or departments of education in Russia, Germany, and China we have enough information to determine that physiotherapy education completed in these countries is not substantially equivalent to that of Canadian-educated physiotherapists. We do not provide a program for these applicants to meet our requirements. We have prepared a special package for these applicants that describes our understanding of the physiotherapy education in their countries. We give them an opportunity to ask us to complete a preliminary assessment to confirm in writing whether our findings are correct. This type of assessment is less expensive than the full assessment and requires the applicants to send in fewer documents. If the preliminary assessment shows that the applicant has completed a university-level education in physiotherapy, and that the education he/she completed was an entry-level education in physiotherapy, we will give the applicant the option of proceeding with a full assessment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

18. How does The Alliance maintain the quality of the Credentialing Program?

We review and maintain the quality of the program through the Monitoring and Evaluation Program.

19. What is the Monitoring and Evaluation Program?

The Monitoring and Evaluation Program is a comprehensive research and quality assurance program. It is a way for us to manage the research and quality assurance activities that relate to credentialing. It is also a way for us to make improvements to the process based on the results of these activities.



20. What are the quality assurance processes related to credentialing?

Feedback from applicants, credentialing evaluators and credentialing service providers, as well as reports, administrative audits and blinded audits, are all part of our regular quality assurance activities.

The Alliance staff and the Evaluation Services Committee receive feedback about the process, materials and procedures, and we frequently use it to improve the existing credentialing processes.

21. Who oversees the Monitoring and Evaluation Program?

The Evaluation Services Committee (ESC) is responsible for overseeing the Credentialing and Examination programs. The ESC is also responsible for setting and monitoring the performance standards of these programs and assuring effective delivery of services. The ESC provides strategic advice and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding research and quality control for these programs. The members of the ESC have expertise in administration, education, clinical practice, physiotherapy regulation, credentialing, exams and measurement and academics. One of the physiotherapist members of the ESC is an internationally educated physiotherapist who has successfully completed the Physiotherapy Competency Examination.

APPLICATION FOR ASSESSMENT

22. Who must apply for an assessment?

If you completed a university-level education in physiotherapy outside of Canada and you want to be eligible to take the Physiotherapy Competency Exam (PCE), you must apply for an assessment of your educational credentials and qualifications. The PCE is a requirement in the Yukon territory and in all provinces except Québec for all physiotherapists educated outside of Canada in order to be eligible for licensing.

For example, an applicant who received their physiotherapy education in the United States and who wants to practise in Yukon or in any province in Canada (except Québec) must first apply for an Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment. They must then complete the PCE.

23. I am a Canadian citizen but I completed my physiotherapy education outside of Canada. Can I apply for the PCE without going through the assessment process?

Canadians who completed their physiotherapy education in another country must first apply for an Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment. There are no exceptions to this assessment requirement.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

24. How does The Alliance assess educational credentials and qualifications?

We assess educational credentials and qualifications using a combination of methods that are part of a nationally endorsed assessment framework.



25. Who determines equivalence for internationally educated physiotherapists?

People who are qualified in the field of international educational credential assessment complete the Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment. Currently, the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) and World Education Service (WES) assist us in reviewing credentials. Occasionally, we use the services of other credentialing agencies such as the agency in Québec or in British Columbia.

Also, external service providers who are experts in assessing physiotherapy competencies assess the physiotherapy-specific content. Physiotherapist Credentials Evaluators are expert evaluators of physiotherapy credentials. These evaluators are familiar with both Canadian and international physiotherapy education. Our Physiotherapist Credentials Evaluators receive annual training.

26. What are the steps in determining equivalence?

There are several steps to determine equivalence for internationally educated applicants:

Step 1:

The individual submits an application, with all the required documentation, to The Alliance. (A credentialing package that lists all the required documentation is available free of charge from our office and on our website.)

Step 2:

We verify that the applicant has submitted all of the required documentation. We send two forms to the applicant.

Form 1:

In form 1, we list the documents we require, the documents we have received from the applicant and if we accepted the documents. We give details if we did not accept the documents. We also list the outstanding documents.

Form 2:

In form 2, we list the documents we require from schools or other institutions, the documents we have received from those and if we accepted the documents. We give details if we did not accept the documents. We also list the outstanding documents.

Step 3:

We start the process of authenticating (verifying) the applicant's documents, school and program. We prepare a detailed inventory of the applicant's courses, including information on course length, credit equivalencies and a list of successfully completed courses noted on the applicant's transcripts (mark sheets). The verification process continues throughout the assessment process. Sometimes we do not receive a response from the school or the institution that has issued the documents we are trying to authenticate (verify). We will continue sending requests to the institution until we receive an answer.



Step 4:

Our credentialing officers or the external credentialing service providers assess the level of education and the content of the education that the applicant has completed. We verify that the physiotherapy program the applicant has completed is at university level. We also verify if the physiotherapy education was at entry level. If it is, we determine if we have assessed a file from the same country, same program, same year of graduation and using the same standard. If yes, our Credentialing Officer will start assessing the file. If no, we send the file to a physiotherapist credential evaluator.

Step 5:

The credential evaluator (credentialing officer or physiotherapist credential evaluator) compares the applicant's course of study and clinical practice to Canadian standards. The evaluator makes a recommendation about the applicant's educational and qualification equivalence.

Step 6:

We review the applicant's entire file and make a decision about the applicant's educational and qualification equivalence.

Step 7:

We contact the applicant and advise them of our decision on their equivalency.

27. How long does it take to complete an assessment?

A review takes anywhere from 4 to 22 weeks from the time we receive the complete application package. The exact amount of time depends mainly on two factors:

- Whether the initial application received is complete (in other words, it includes all of the required documentation). Although we require a complete application package, we can start the assessment before we receive **all** your required documents. For example, we require proof of proficiency in English or French, but you can submit this during the process or even after we have finished the educational credentials review. We have listed the documents you can submit during the process in the credentialing package under "Application Checklist."
- Whether the program from which the applicant graduated is new to our assessment process. Occasionally, some files require detailed research and consultation with credentialing service providers, which may take extra time.

28. How long is the result of assessment valid?

It depends on the outcome of the review:

- If we determine that your education and qualifications are substantially equivalent, this substantial equivalency is valid for two years from the date indicated on your Successful Result Letter. This means that your first attempt on the Written Component of the PCE must occur within these two years.
- If we determine that your education and qualifications are not substantially equivalent, you will be given an opportunity to provide additional information and supporting documentation. You will have 60 days from the date noted on the Unsuccessful Result Letter to submit this documentation.



- If we determine that your education and qualifications are not substantially equivalent, and if you agree with the results and confirm that you do not have any additional documents to submit, we will let you know if you are eligible for our Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program. We will give you 60 days to apply for PLAR. This document includes a section on PLAR.

29. What happens if my eligibility to write the Physiotherapy Competency Examination expires?

You will not be able to register for the PCE if your eligibility expires and

- the credentialing standards have changed at the time you decide to apply for the PCE; or
- we have received new information from your school or other sources that were not available at the time you applied for an assessment.

If your eligibility has expired and you want to apply for the PCE, or if your eligibility is about to expire and you know you cannot apply for the PCE before the expiration date, you must send a written request for an extension to the credentialing department. In the letter, explain why you were not able to take the PCE in the time period we provided. You must also indicate when (which administration) you are planning to take the PCE.

We will review your request, the standards in place at the time of your request and any information that we may have received from your school or other sources. We may also ask you to submit additional information or documents.

We will then make one of the following decisions:

- We may extend your credentialing eligibility. You will then be eligible to take the PCE later.
- We may ask you to apply for credentialing again. You will then need to send in a new application and additional fees.

GENERAL INFORMATION — FEES AND ASSISTANCE

30. What is the fee for the Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment to determine educational equivalence?

\$780.00 (in Canadian funds)

31. What is the fee for the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program?

\$425.00 (in Canadian funds)

32. How do I pay for my assessment?

You may pay by any of the following methods:

- debit (You must make an appointment to come to The Alliance office, and you must bring your debit card.)
- certified cheque, money order or bank draft (payable to Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators)



- credit card (We accept Visa and MasterCard. To pay by credit card you must complete the appropriate section on the application form or make an appointment to come to The Alliance office and bring your card.)
- world money order in Canadian dollars (for payments from banks outside of Canada)

You must pay your fees in Canadian dollars. You must pay all fees before we will begin your assessment.

33. Is there any financial assistance for the educational equivalence fee?

No. We do not offer financial assistance, and we do not provide information on possible sources of financial assistance. We cannot waive or change credentialing or PLAR fees. The Alliance is a not-for-profit organization. The funds we need to administer the credentialing program come from the fees paid for the program by the applicants who apply for assessment.

34. May I request that my school submit my required documents before I send my application and fees?

We encourage you to send your application and fees to us before we receive any documents from schools and other organizations. We will only create a file folder for your documents when we receive a completed application and full payment of fees. We will keep on file any documents that we receive before you send your paid application for twenty-four (24) months.

35. What happens if my school information arrives before my application?

We electronically log and number all documents we receive. We check the log every time we receive an application and match it with other documents we received before your application. When we receive your application, we assign you a file number and a PIN (personal identification number). We will keep documents we receive from your school in a file for 24 months (two years) from the date we receive them. If we do not receive your completed application form during this time, we will discard the documents we received from your school.

36. Is it ok if I get a friend or a family member to pick up my Official Transcripts / Mark-sheets / Statement of Marks from the school and then mail them to you?

No, we must receive your Official transcripts/ Mark-sheets / Statement of Marks or your Diploma Supplement from the school.

This means that even if the school puts the documents in an envelope and seals or stamps the envelope and gives it to someone else (you / your friend / your family member or someone you know) and that individual then sends the documents to us either by putting it in a courier envelope or sending it in the same envelope that the school provided, we will not accept those documents.

Only the school can send these documents to us. We will verify who sent the documents and we will not accept the documents if we verify that the school was not the sender.



GENERAL INFORMATION — OTHER

37. The Alliance has already evaluated a classmate from my school, yet they asked that I submit all of my documents. Why can The Alliance not consider the documents submitted by my classmate as a reference?

We do accept some of the documents submitted by your classmates as a reference. However, we will only accept them if your school confirms that we can use those documents as a reference for assessing your file. For example, your school does not need to send a syllabus if we have a syllabus from your classmate and your school has confirmed that we could use that as part of assessing your educational credentials. We have included information about this in the Credentialing package.

From our experience, in most countries physiotherapy students can take many elective courses. Therefore, the educational background of two students from the same program may not be the same. Also, we must check that you have successfully completed all the required courses during your program of study. We can only do that by reviewing your transcript, not a transcript that belongs to your classmate.

38. Who should send my transcripts?

The school you graduated from must send your transcripts to our office. There are exceptions to this. For example, in some countries, a college, which is affiliated with a university, administers physiotherapy education. In those cases, the university has the authority to issue official transcripts, so it must issue and send your transcripts, not the college. We will not accept transcripts issued or sent by the college. Check the Application Checklist in the credentialing package for information on specific countries. Contact our Client Services Coordinator if you do not know who should send your transcripts.

39. What if the school I attended no longer exists and I cannot obtain documentation?

We consider extraordinary circumstances on a case-by-case basis. We may already have information, or we may know whom you can contact to obtain documents. Because every case is different, we ask that you contact the Client Services Coordinator by phone at (416) 234-8800 extension 30 or by email at csc@alliancept.org for more information specific to your case. We will help you get the necessary information and documents.

40. What if the school that I attended provides information and documents only in a language other than English or French?

If the school does not provide translations, you must ask your school to send the documents in the original language to our office. We will then make a copy of the documents we received from your school and will send you those copies. You must send those copies to a certified translator. The certified translator must send both the original language documents we have sent **and** the translations of those documents to our office. All translations must be word-for-word and in the same format as the original document.

If the school does send translations, they **must** include an official copy of the documents in the original language as well.



41. Where does The Alliance send my equivalence results?

We mail your results to the address written on your credentialing application. It is your responsibility to inform us if your address changes. Click here to download a copy of the [Change of Information Form](#).

42. I have a representative in Canada. What kind of information would The Alliance provide to my representative?

If another person will be representing you, you must provide us with a letter saying so. You must have signed the letter and had it notarized in the country where you live. We will send any information on your file to you **or** to your agent or representative. The information we will send includes the status of your file, the progress towards your credentials review, your final evaluation results and reports, and any other correspondence. Download the [Authorization Letter](#) from our website. You do not need to use this letter but you have to make sure that the information we have noted in the Authorization Letter is also included in the letter that you will provide.

We do not require an authorization letter from you in order to share the information in your file with a Canadian physiotherapy regulator. You authorize us to do this when you sign your application.

43. How can I change my address?

Print the [Change of Information Form](#) from our website to make any changes. You can mail or fax this form to:

Client Services Associate
1243 Islington Avenue Suite 501
Toronto, ON M8X 1Y9
Fax (416) 234-8820

If you cannot download or print the form, contact our office at (416) 234-8800 extension 21 or by email at email@alliancept.org. We can fax or mail you a copy of the form.

44. Will The Alliance correspond with external agencies (for example, social workers, immigration officers) to clarify the purpose or the process of the credentialing assessment?

While we cannot advocate for applicants, we can correspond with external agencies to clarify the purpose, processes and fees of the assessment only if you authorize us to do so. We will need your authorization in writing. Download the [Authorization Letter](#) from our website.

45. Will The Alliance inform the Canadian physiotherapy regulators about the outcome of my assessment?

Some regulators require confirmation regarding educational credentials assessment or language testing before they will issue a temporary, restricted or supervised licence to practise. If you would like us to send confirmation to a regulator, please complete a Verification Request Form. You can download the [Verification Request Form](#) from our website or obtain one from the regulator.



Remember that when you sign your application form, you authorize us to provide information about the status of your application to any of the physiotherapy regulators in Canada. This means that we do not require an authorization letter from you in order to share the information in your file with a Canadian physiotherapy regulator.

46. Which schools and programs are already accredited?

We do not accredit educational programs. We evaluate the education of applicants, not the educational programs. Two classmates who graduated from the same educational institution in the same year may have taken different courses. We therefore have to review each case individually in order to determine the equivalency of an individual's education and not the entire educational program of an institution.

47. Can I start the educational equivalence process before my physiotherapy training is complete?

We will start the educational equivalence process if you have successfully completed all the requirements for the degree or diploma but are not able to send your degree or diploma because you have not yet received it from the institution. In this case, we will require a letter from your school confirming that you have successfully completed all the requirements and indicating the scheduled date for conferral of the award (your degree or diploma). Go to [Verification of Completion of All Requirements for Degree](#) on our website to view a sample confirmation letter. Although we will start the assessment process, we will not send you the results until we have received an official copy of your degree or diploma.

48. How many copies of my degrees does The Alliance require?

We require one notarized copy of your degree(s). You may also submit the original copy of your degree(s) or diploma(s). We will return the original copy to you by regular mail once we have completed your assessment. If you want us to return the original copy of your diploma by courier, please check the credentialing package for the fee for this service.

49. Can I give my application to my school and have it all sent in one package?

We will accept all documents we receive from your school. Read the Application checklist carefully to make sure the documents are in the format we require. For example, you cannot give a photocopy of your degree to the school and ask them to send it to us with other school documents. You could notarize your degree and give the notarized version to the school to send to us or you can ask the school to certify your degree and send it to us with other school documents.

50. I understand that, depending on where I completed my formal physiotherapy education, I may ask The Alliance to complete a preliminary assessment of my credentials. If I ask The Alliance to complete a preliminary assessment and they determine that I have to apply for a full assessment, what happens to my file and the fees I paid?

If we determine, after conducting a preliminary assessment (go to [Preliminary Assessment](#) on our website for more information), that we need to do a detailed review of your documents, we will ask you to submit more documentation along with the rest of the fees that we require for a full assessment.



51. Should I apply for the Physiotherapy Competency Examination at the same time that I apply for credential evaluation?

No. You must successfully complete either the credentialing process or the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process, or you must receive a Provisional Eligibility letter from the credentialing department in order to become eligible to apply for a specific administration of the Physiotherapy Competency Examination.

52. What can someone who is a gymnastics teacher or a massage therapist or a physician overseas do to train as a physiotherapist in Canada?

You must have a university-level credential in physiotherapy (for example, a bachelor's degree or *entry-level* master's degree, or a diploma that is deemed substantially equivalent). If you believe that your formal physiotherapy education was not at university level or was not in the field of physiotherapy, you may contact one of the 14 recognized Canadian physiotherapy programs to obtain information about physiotherapy education in Canada and the processes and procedures for application. Go to [our website](#) for a list of Canadian physiotherapy programs.

53. How can I upgrade my education in Canada if I have a diploma as a physiotherapy assistant?

You must have a university-level credential in physiotherapy (for example, a bachelor's level or *entry-level* master's degree, or a diploma that is deemed substantially equivalent). If you believe that your professional physiotherapy education was not at university level or it was not in the field of physiotherapy, you may contact one of the 14 recognized Canadian physiotherapy programs to obtain information about physiotherapy education in Canada and the processes and procedures for application. Go to [our website](#) for a list of Canadian physiotherapy programs.

54. Can I submit documents in person?

Yes. We will be happy to accept your application and documents in person. You may also arrange to have a person you have authorized to act on your behalf (for example, a lawyer, family member, friend or relative) drop off your application and documents.

The Alliance office is located at 1243 Islington Avenue, Suite 501, Toronto, Ontario.

We are happy to accept your application at our office, but we will not be able to review your application and documents at the time you bring them to our office if you have not scheduled an appointment before you come. It is your responsibility to ensure that your application is complete and that you are submitting all supporting documentation. Our credentialing staff members work within a very tight schedule. If you want to see our Client Services Coordinator or one of our Credentialing Officers when you drop off your documents, you must contact our office to schedule an appointment.

55. What is Declaration of Identity Form?

We changed our policy about acceptable identification documents on February 1, 2010. You must complete and notarize Declaration of Identity Form and include supporting identity document(s) that have your (1) full legal name, (2) your photo (taken in the last 6 months), (3) your date of birth, and (4) your signature. You must make sure that your identity document(s) is official (i.e., issued by the government /



agency authorized by the government to issue official documents); is valid (it is not expired), and can be verified with the source.

The Declaration of Identity Form will be valid for 5 years and will be shared with the Exam department when you become eligible for the Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE).

The photograph and the signature on your official identity document that you will send to us must be very clear. Make sure that this information is clearly visible when you make a copy of your document. We will ask you to send us another copy if we are unable to see the information we need on the copy you send to us.

56. Do I have to send any other identity document if I send the completed Declaration of Identity Form?

Yes, you must also send us a copy of one or more identity documents. For example, a copy of your passport with the pages that have your name, signature, date of birth and photo is acceptable. If the information we need is on more than one document, you must then send a copy of the documents that have the information. For example, if your name, photo and date of birth are on your passport but your signature is not, you must send a copy of your passport and a copy of another official identity document that has your signature. Note that you DO NOT need to notarize your identity document. Only the Declaration of Identity Form must be notarized.

57. What does “notarized” mean?

A notarized document is a document that has been certified by a person, often called a notary public, who is authorized by the state or country in which the person resides to administer oaths (swearing to the truth of a statement) and certify documents. The full name, address, signature and seal or stamp of a notary public is necessary to confirm the oath of truth of the person notarizing the document. You must ensure that the notary has the legal authority to certify documents or to administer oaths within the country and outside of the country in which they practice. For example, an oath taken by the notary in Ontario must be legally enforceable in Ontario, as well as in the rest of Canada, and internationally.

58. Who are acceptable people to notarize and translate my documents?

A notary public is the only person who can certify your documents. Some lawyers are also notary publics. The Alliance recognizes that a notary public may not exist in certain countries. If there is no notary public in the country you are applying from, contact our Client Services Coordinator by phone at (416) 234-8800 extension 30 or by email at csc@alliancept.org for information about other options.

59. Can an engineer (or another professional) certify my documents?

No. The Alliance only accepts documents that a notary public has notarized. The Alliance recognizes that a notary public may not exist in certain countries. If there is no notary public in the country you are applying from, contact our Client Services Coordinator by phone at (416) 234-8800 extension 30 or by email at csc@alliancept.org for information about other options.



60. How can I tell if my documents have already been notarized?

The stamp or seal must contain the words “Notary Public” as well as the address, registration number and official name of the authorized person.

61. Can I submit a photocopy of the previously notarized documents?

No. We can only accept the original copy of the notarized document with the original notarial seal or stamp and the original signature.

62. Do all documents need to be notarized?

We have listed the documents that need to be notarized in the credentialing package. Please read the package carefully for information on which documents need to be notarized.

63. Do I need to send notarized copies of translations, or do I need to send the original translations?

We require original translations of any document that is not in English or French. A translation must be done by a certified translator. If you are planning to use these translated documents in the future and for other purposes, take the original translations to a notary public and have notarized copies made before you submit the original translations to The Alliance office. However, we will only accept the original translations.

64. I am planning to study physiotherapy in another country. I will graduate in four years and return to Canada. Are there courses that I need to take prior to arriving in Canada? What can I do to prepare myself in advance?

A Board of Directors that includes members from all the provinces and Yukon set the credentialing standards. They can be changed without notice, so the standards in place today may not be valid when you return. We suggest that you stay informed by visiting our website, www.alliancept.org. We make every effort to give advance notice about any changes to the standards.

65. Can I submit my application form by fax or email?

No. Currently we do not accept applications or supporting documentation through email or fax unless we have an agreement with your physiotherapy program. Please check our website from time to time for future developments in this area.

66. I am a physiotherapist who was trained in another country. Can I work as a support worker or a physiotherapy assistant or aid?

You must contact the physiotherapy regulatory body in the province or territory in which you want to practise to obtain information about the requirements for working as a support worker or physiotherapy assistant. Go to [Regulator Member](#) on our website for a list of provincial and territorial regulatory colleges.

67. Can I submit my membership number for proof of membership?

No. You must submit one of the following for proof of membership in a physiotherapy regulatory agency or association:

- a notarized copy of your membership certificate or membership card
- a letter confirming you are a member
- a letter confirming you are eligible to apply for membership



- a letter confirming you are eligible to practise as a physiotherapist in the country where you completed your physiotherapy education

68. How can I find out if The Alliance has received additional information for my file?

We electronically log all documents we receive at our office on a daily basis. The mail usually arrives by 12 noon (Eastern Standard Time). You may contact our Receptionist by phone at (416) 234-8800 extension 21 or by email at email@alliancept.org after 12 noon on any given day to ask about documents received up to that time.

69. Is there any other information or documents that The Alliance may require later that are not listed in the credentialing package?

We have included a checklist of required documents in the credentialing package. We usually do not require additional documents from applicants who have submitted all the documents listed on the checklist, including complete and detailed course descriptions. If we need to do additional research before we can finish the review, we will inform you in writing of any additional documents or information that we need. We may also contact your school to obtain information.

70. What does a physiotherapist assistant do, and what can I do to become registered as a physiotherapy assistant?

You must contact the physiotherapy regulatory body in the province or territory in which you want to practise to obtain information about physiotherapy assistants. Go to [Regulator Member](#) on our website for a list of provincial and territorial regulatory colleges.

71. I applied for credentialing a few years ago. Can The Alliance use the documents I provided then?

We can use documents that we received from you in the past. However, the documents must meet our current standards. We have a document retention policy, so we will try to retrieve documents (except for your application form and document request form) from your previous application(s) after you have applied if you sign the consent / waiver section of the new application form. We will make a list of the documents we already have and will ask you to sign the Declaration section of the List of Available Documents. We will then be able to use the documents on the list. We will also let you know what other documents (if any) you need to provide.

72. Do I need to make a list of documents for you to access from educational institutions I have attended?

You do not need to make a list of documents for us to access. Instead, you must ask the educational institutions to send the necessary documents or transcripts to our office. We have listed documents that the issuing institutions must send to our office on the checklist.

See current [credentialing package](#) for the Application Checklist.

73. If I do not sign the Declaration section on the List of Available Documents, will The Alliance still access my previous file?

No. We will not retrieve previous documents if you do not sign the Declaration section of the List of Available Documents. Note that if you do not sign this section and you are missing basic documents that may be in a previous file, we will not



process your application until you submit the required documents again or until you sign the Declaration section of the list.

74. I want to become a member of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA). Does The Alliance have any information about membership with CPA?

You must contact the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) for information on CPA membership.

GENERAL INFORMATION — EMPLOYMENT/REFERENCE LETTERS

75. I was asked to provide an employment letter from my previous employer for proof of supervised clinical practice in certain specialty areas. Is there a format (or an employer form) for employment letters?

No, there is no format for employment letters. They should be in the form of a letter and they must be in English or French. An employment letter must explain the areas of practice you worked in, and it must list the hours you worked in each area. The letter should also indicate if it was paid employment. Your employer must send the letter to The Alliance office. You can go to our website and download the template Sample Employment Letter. You do not have to use this form if you don't want to.

76. Does it matter what country my employment letters come from? Should they come from my country of origin?

Employment letters can come from anywhere in the world as long as they are written or translated into English or French and as long as you were eligible to practise as a physiotherapist in that country.

77. When I applied for assessment, I sent reference letters and employment letters to The Alliance office. When I received my result letter, it did not mention the many reference letters I submitted. None of the letters were considered in my assessment. Why is that?

If we need reference or employment letters to assess your file, we will write to you and ask you for them. Submit these documents only if we ask you to do so. You do not need to spend time, effort and money to submit these documents if we do not need them.

78. Where do employers send employment letters? Who should they address them to?

Employers should mail employment letters to The Alliance office (see Contact Us). They can address the letters to "Director of Credentialing".

79. Will The Alliance accept faxed employment letters?

We will accept faxed letters if they come from the employer. However, we prefer mailed originals.

80. Can The Alliance correspond with my school on my behalf to obtain additional information when gaps are identified?

Yes. We will correspond with your school if you request this in writing.



81. Do all applicants write a written exam?

All internationally educated applicants whose education and qualifications we consider substantially equivalent to those of a Canadian-educated physiotherapist must complete the Physiotherapy Competency Examination, unless they want to practise in Quebec. Some regulators may issue you a temporary, interim, provisional or restricted certificate before you write the exam. Please contact the physiotherapy regulator in the province or territory in which you want to practise to find out if you can get a temporary or restricted certificate before you write the exam. You can find more information under Exam Frequently Asked Questions. Click here to view [The Alliance | Examinations | FAQs](#).

GENERAL INFORMATION — DOCUMENTS — SUBMISSION

82. The school mailed my transcripts and course syllabus in a sealed envelope to my address. Should I submit the sealed envelope along with my application?

No. To be considered official, some documents must be sent to our office by the issuing institution, not to you. Check the Credentialing Package to view a list of those documents. We will only accept official documents.

83. I attended other universities before I completed my physiotherapy education, do I need to submit official transcripts and degree / diploma from these programs even if I did not complete them?

Yes, we ask for the official transcripts for any university courses you completed even if you did not complete the program. You should arrange for the official transcripts from the issuing institution to come to our office directly. You must also send us a notarized copy of your degree / diploma if you completed other education.

84. I started at one university and then transferred to the university I graduated from, why are you asking me to arrange for the official transcripts from the issuing institution for the courses I transferred?

In order to consider any of the university courses you completed, we ask for the official transcripts from the institution where you completed the courses. We must be able to see what courses and the number of credits of the courses you completed in a university before you transferred to another university.

85. What does “notarized copy/original of your membership card or letter of eligibility from the physiotherapy regulatory agency or association in your country of physiotherapy education” mean? What should I submit for evidence?

Evidence of membership or eligibility could include notarized copies or originals of

- a licence that confirms you can practise as a physiotherapist in your country of education;
- your membership card confirming you can practise as a physiotherapist in the country of education; or
- a letter confirming your eligibility to practise as a physiotherapist in the country of education.



For example, if you completed your physiotherapy education in India but are currently living and practising in the UK, we need an official copy of your membership certificate confirming your eligibility to practise as a physiotherapist in India from the Indian Association of Physiotherapists. You do not have to be a member of the physiotherapy regulatory body or the physiotherapy association in the country where you completed your physiotherapy education. We will also accept a letter from these organizations confirming that you would be eligible to practise as a physiotherapist if you applied for membership, or that you are eligible to apply for membership or registration as a “physiotherapist.”

86. The Alliance has asked me to submit a notarized or original copy of my membership card or letter of eligibility in the physiotherapy regulatory agency or association in the country where I completed my physiotherapy education. There is no physiotherapy association or physiotherapy regulator in that country. What do I do?

In the past, we have received letters from universities, ministries or departments of health, ministries or departments of education, or institutions called “Register” or “Health Registry” confirming that applicants are eligible to practise as physiotherapists in the countries where they completed their physiotherapy education. If there is no physiotherapy association or physiotherapy regulator in the country where you completed your physiotherapy education, please contact our Client Services Coordinator by phone at (416) 234-8800 extension 30 or by email at csc@alliancept.org to find out where you can obtain your letter of confirmation.

87. I applied to The Alliance for an assessment, but have not received notification about the status of my application. How can I find out if my application is complete?

Our Client Services Coordinator will contact you by telephone (if you live in North America and you have provided a telephone number on your application form) or by email or mail within 3 business days of receiving your application. The Client Services Coordinator will send you an “Introduction Letter” within 10 business days of receiving your documents. In this letter, we will list the status of the documents we received from you and the documents we still need. We will also list the documents that we need from your school or other institutions and organizations. Contact our office if you do not hear from us within 20 days after you mailed your documents.

88. Will The Alliance assess my credentials if my application form is not complete?

An application form is complete when you have filled in all the fields on the form, signed and dated it and included the assessment fees. If you send an incomplete application form (it is missing information or you did not sign it), we will return it to you by regular mail. We will also return any documents that you sent with the application form. If you sent a complete application form but did not send the supporting documents listed on the checklist, we will process your application. We will then send you a list of the documents that we need from you and your school.

89. What type of clinical practice is accepted?

If the review identifies gaps in a clinical practice area, we accept proof of experience, defined as a period of clinical practice you did after completing your formal physiotherapy program, under the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program. Most applicants have enough hours of clinical education from their



physiotherapy program, so please do not send information about your experience after graduation when you apply for an assessment. We will let you know if we need this information. Graduates of accredited Canadian physiotherapy programs complete a minimum of 1,025 hours of supervised clinical practise during their physiotherapy program. This includes supervised practice in the three specialty areas of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurological conditions. We require that internationally educated applicants meet the minimum requirements in this area.

90. What does Supervised Clinical Practice mean?

This is defined as a period of physiotherapy clinical training done in a supervised setting during your formal physiotherapy education. Some of the other terms used include “internship,” “clinical practice,” “clinical placement,” “clinical period” and “residency.” In most countries, an internship or a residency period is included as part of the formal physiotherapy program. In some countries, the clinical practice is completed after graduation. However, it is a period of clinical training approved by the educational institution or sometimes by the ministry of health. We do not consider educational periods undertaken as an “observer” or a “researcher” to be Supervised Clinical Practice.

91. On the application form, applicants are asked to identify the provinces or territories in which they expect to apply for registration. What happens if I decide to apply for registration in a province that I did not identify on my application form? Would I not be allowed to apply for registration in that province?

Your choices of provinces and territories on your application form will not affect your ability to register in other provinces. We collect this information for the purpose of data gathering only. Sometimes Canadian physiotherapy regulators want to know how many applicants have selected their province as first or second choice. We use the information we collect from your application form to inform the regulators of the numbers of applicants who have selected their provinces or territories.

Each provincial or territorial physiotherapy regulator in Canada is responsible for issuing a license or registration to practise physiotherapy in its own province or territory. We provide an opinion on an applicant’s educational equivalency. The individual provincial and territorial regulators decide whether an applicant can register.

92. I understand that some of the required documents must be sent by the issuing institution to The Alliance office. Will The Alliance return those documents to me once the review is completed?

Documents we receive from academic institutions and documents in sealed envelopes become the property of The Alliance. We will not give these documents to applicants. All documents submitted to us are subject to verification.

STATISTICS, OUTCOMES AND OPTIONS

93. How many requests for educational equivalence assessments does The Alliance receive each year?

We receive over 1,000 inquiries each year about educational credentials and qualifications equivalence. About 400 official requests are submitted each year.



94. What percentage of applicants obtains equivalency?

Approximately 42% of applicants have substantially equivalent education and qualifications. Approximately 53% of our applicants do not have substantially equivalent education and qualifications, but their education is close to equivalent. These applicants are eligible to address their identified deficiencies through our Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program. This means that applicants may either provide proof of informal learning in the identified areas for review and recognition or they may complete required education or training through the PLAR program. Less than 5% of applicants are unsuccessful or send in applications that become “inactive.”

95. What is an inactive file?

We will correspond with an applicant for a period of one year from the date we receive the application and fees. If, during this time, we do not start the assessment process because the applicant has not submitted the required documents or we have not received documents from other institutions, we will close the file. We consider a file inactive when we have received no communication or information from an applicant for a period of one year.

96. Can my file be re-activated?

If you send us a request to activate your file again after the period of one year has passed and we have received no documents, we will consider your request. You must send us a written request describing the reasons you were not able to provide the necessary documentation within the allowed time frame. We will review your request and determine which documents and fees we require to activate your file again.

97. What are my options if The Alliance does not consider my education and qualifications equivalent?

If you have small gaps in your qualifications, you can apply for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

If you have large gaps in your qualifications (for example, your physiotherapy education was not at university level, or your education was not in physiotherapy), we do not offer a program for you to become equivalent. However, we will send you a list of accredited university-level physiotherapy programs in Canada.

98. Can I apply for credentialing again if my education and qualifications are not considered substantially equivalent?

No and Yes!

No, you cannot apply for Credentialing again if we have reviewed all the documents and determined your education is not substantially equivalent. Remember that you can submit additional information and supporting documents that you did not submit with your application before we close your file.

If you have submitted all the documents you had and we still considered your education not to be substantially equivalent to the education and qualifications of a Canadian educated physiotherapist, and you still disagree with the assessment result, you can apply for an Administrative Reconsideration and then an Appeal.



Yes, you can apply again, but only if we have changed the standards and you believe that you may meet the new requirements if you re-apply for an assessment. Once we receive your request for a re-assessment, we will let you know what your options are, how much you have to pay and what documents we will need.

99. If my qualifications are not considered substantially equivalent, will The Alliance identify my gaps?

Yes, we send you a written report that lists the reasons for your unsuccessful outcome. We list the standards we used to assess your education and qualifications, and we note all the gaps we identified in your education. We give you 60 days to send additional information.

100. I received my assessment results. I agree with some of the gaps, but I know that some of them were covered during my education. Can I apply for PLAR to address some of the gaps while I submit additional information for areas I feel I have met?

Yes, you can. We base our assessment on the documentation we have received from you and from your school. You are the only person who knows if you are actually missing the gaps we identified. For example, you might have completed the gaps through prior learning, you might have taken courses after your physiotherapy program, or some of the identified deficiencies might have been covered as part of your formal physiotherapy education. If you feel that you have met the identified gaps, you must submit supporting documents and information for review and consideration.

101. If my qualifications are not considered substantially equivalent, would The Alliance provide programs to help me fill any identified gaps?

If your qualifications are not similar to the education and qualifications of a Canadian-educated physiotherapist but are close, you can still become eligible for the Physiotherapy Competency Exam. You can do this either by providing proof of prior learning that we recognize as filling your gaps, or by completing some additional coursework. To become eligible, you must apply for the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program.

102. What is the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program?

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program is an alternative to help applicants whose previous education and experience is not substantially equivalent to our national standards. PLAR evaluates the education and experience of an applicant for each competency. We then provide a written analysis of gaps that we identified to ensure applicants know exactly what steps to take next.

We launched the PLAR program in 1998. Applicants whose education is not found to be substantially equivalent and who have relatively small gaps in their education are able to apply for the program. PLAR provides credit for courses and seminars completed after formal physiotherapy education, as well as experience and upgrading opportunities for credentialing applicants with small gaps in their physiotherapy education.

As part of the credentialing service, we help applicants find options to fill their gaps, either in Canada or in their home country or in other countries.



103. Does The Alliance collaborate with other organizations on programs to fill the gaps?

The Alliance has a formal relationship with Thompson Rivers University — Open Learning Division in Burnaby, British Columbia, to accept Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) applicants, who are filling academic gaps, as students.

Since 1998, PLAR applicants have also filled their academic gaps by enrolling in courses at other recognized universities and other institutions. Gaps in supervised clinical practice areas have been met by past work experience.

104. What happens when my qualifications are not substantially equivalent and my gaps are relatively large?

Applicants who have large differences in program length, content gaps, or a different level of education (for example, physiotherapy education that is not at university level) are not eligible for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). These applicants can contact any of 14 accredited Canadian physiotherapy programs for information on registration processes and procedures if they want to apply for university-level physiotherapy education in Canada. If applicants want to complete university-level education in physiotherapy in another country, we can also provide information on countries that offer university-level physiotherapy education.

105. After The Alliance has assessed my academic credentials, will The Alliance also consider me for the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program?

This will depend on the gaps. We assess the academic educational credentials and qualifications of all applicants based on nationally set standards. If we determine that an applicant has gaps, we will let them submit additional information and supporting documentation that confirms the identified gaps were covered as part of their formal physiotherapy education. We will review all the additional information as part of our supplementary assessment. If we determine that the applicant has some gaps that were not covered in their formal physiotherapy education we will decide if the applicant is eligible for our PLAR program.

If, the applicant is eligible for PLAR, we will send them a PLAR application package so they can submit proof of prior informal learning, which we will review and consider for recognition. If they still have gaps, we will give them a remediation plan (for example, a list of pre-approved courses they can complete to meet the requirements).

106. How can I apply for the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program?

You cannot apply for the PLAR until you receive the results of your Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment. If your education and qualifications are not considered substantially equivalent, we will write to you and tell you whether you are eligible to apply for PLAR. We will send you a PLAR application at that time.



107. Can I apply for credentialing and the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program at the same time?

No. You must wait until you receive the result of the Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment. You will be able to apply for PLAR only if it is necessary or if you are eligible for the program.

Forty-two percent of our applicants successfully complete the credentialing process. Another 15 percent successfully complete the credentialing process by submitting additional information that they did not submit with their application. Another 5 percent of applicants meet all requirements and are only missing hours in supervised clinical practice. These individuals can submit proof of work experience without applying for PLAR. Only 33 percent of applicants are required to apply for PLAR. It is for these reasons that we ask that you wait until we can determine if you need to apply for PLAR or if you can meet the requirements through other methods.

108. Can I submit information from my formal physiotherapy education while I am completing the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program?

Yes. While applicants can submit information and supporting documentation from their formal physiotherapy educational institution at any time during the PLAR program, we encourage applicants to do this before they apply for PLAR.

109. I was in the process of completing a course to fulfill one of the identified gaps on my Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Agreement when I realized that the content was already covered during my formal physiotherapy program. What can I do?

You must immediately tell your credentialing officer. You must also ask the school where you received your formal physiotherapy education to send information and supporting documentation about the content to The Alliance office (not to you). We will review the information and determine if we can assign credits to the area of deficiency. If so, you can cancel your registration in that course.

110. My classmate and I are both completing the PLAR program. We both completed the same courses during our physiotherapy program back home. Why do I have to take more courses than my classmate if we completed the same program?

You must immediately tell your credentialing officer. You must also ask your classmate to send us his or her file number so that we can compare the assessment results. We will first review the files to determine if the standards used in assessing the two files were the same. If different standards were in place at the time of each assessment, we will let you know. You can then continue with the courses you are taking. If we used the same standards for both assessments, we will let you know if we need more information from your school. We will review the information and determine if we can assign credits to the area of deficiency. If so, you can cancel your registration in that course.



111. My PLAR Agreement states that I have two years to complete the plan and meet the requirements. Why do I have to fulfill the requirements in only two years? Can this time be extended?

The maximum time to fulfill the requirements identified on the PLAR Agreement is two (2) years. We will extend this time under extraordinary circumstances (see the next question for more information). We considered the following factors when we determined the maximum time allowed to fulfill PLAR requirements:

- Most PLAR applicants fulfill their identified requirements by taking an average of two (2) three-credit university-level courses.
- A research study completed in 2002 indicated that there is a relationship between “years since graduation” and “success on the PCE.” Specifically, it concluded that the failure rate is lower for candidates taking the exam within three years of graduation and higher for candidates taking the exam seven or more years after graduation. On average, most PLAR applicants complete their physiotherapy education six years before immigrating to Canada.

112. My PLAR eligibility has expired. Can I ask for an extension?

We review requests for extensions on a case-by-case basis. You must send us a letter explaining why you were not able to complete the program within the approved time frame. You must also arrange for any transcripts documenting progress you made during the PLAR period to be sent to our office so we can review them. We will review all the supporting documents, confirm whether the standards we used when we assessed your file are still the same, and determine if we can give you an extension.

113. How much is the tuition for courses that I have to complete as part of the PLAR program?

The administration fee for the PLAR program is \$425 in Canadian funds. Make the fee (money order or certified cheque) payable to the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators. The institutions offering courses set the fees for each course. Course fees may range from \$250 to \$2,000 per course or module. For information on course fees, contact the admission office of the educational institution you are planning to study at.

114. I have completed a course for my PLAR program. Can I send my transcripts / certificate to The Alliance?

No. All official transcripts and certificates must be sent directly to The Alliance from the issuing institution. You must send a request to the university / institution where you completed the course and ask them to send your official transcript to us.

115. My PLAR letter says that I need to send The Alliance an ‘option plan’. What is an option plan?

When you sign your PLAR agreement and return it to The Alliance, you need to attach an option plan. An option plan is a letter from you that tells your credentialing officer how you want to fulfill each of the gaps listed on your PLAR agreement. For example, if pharmacology is listed on your PLAR agreement and you want to take a course from Thompson Rivers University to fulfill this



requirement your option plan should state “for pharmacology I plan to complete course XXXX (course code) at Thompson Rivers University”. You can change your option plan at any time by sending the changes to your plan to your credentialing officer in writing.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

116. Does The Alliance assess physiotherapy-specific language skills?

No. The Alliance does not assess physiotherapy-specific language skills.

The Alliance assesses general language skills using external service providers such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) and Testcan / CanTEST. This flexibility means that candidates are able to choose the most convenient and appropriate test resources. Language proficiency is part of the credentials assessment.

117. Why is a test of language proficiency required?

We require that candidates for the Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE) be able to listen, read, speak and write either English or French with reasonable fluency before they are eligible to take the PCE.

Canadian-educated physiotherapists receive their education in English or French, so graduates of Canadian physiotherapy programs are proficient in English or French. Internationally educated physiotherapists must provide evidence of language fluency in English or French to be considered substantially equivalent to Canadian-educated physiotherapists. If your education was not in English or French, you will need to take a test of language proficiency.

Canada is a bilingual country, but not all provinces and territories are bilingual. Therefore, some provincial and territorial regulators will not let you become licensed or registered if you are not fluent in the official language of that province or territory. When you find out the requirements of the regulator in the province or territory in which you want to practise, make sure you find out which language they require you to be fluent in to become licensed or registered.

118. Is proof of language proficiency required before the educational assessment process can start?

No. We will start the assessment process once we receive all other required documents. However, if we complete your file review before we receive your proof of language proficiency and your result is successful, we will hold your successful results until we receive your proof of language proficiency.

Remember that you cannot apply for the PCE or receive a provisional eligibility letter before you successfully complete the language proficiency requirement.

119. What are the acceptable language proficiency tests?

If any part of your physiotherapy education was in a language other than English or French, you must provide us with proof that you are fluent in either English or French. You may provide evidence of fluency by completing any one of the approved language tests and meet the minimum scores. For a list of approved



language test, refer to Language Proficiency section in our Credentialing Package posted on our website at www.alliacnept.org

120. When are the tests of language proficiency held?

You must contact the **language testing agencies** that we accept to obtain information on their registration processes and procedures.

121. How can I obtain the contact information for TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, MELAB or CanTEST / TestCan?

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

www.ets.org/toefl or www.toefl.com

Email: toefl@ets.org

Test of Spoken English (TSE)

Website: www.ets.org/tse

[Test Dates and Locations](#)

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

Website: www.ielts.org

Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)

Website: www.ets.org/toeic

Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)

www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/testing/melab

Email: melabelium@umich.edu

CanTEST

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Arts

Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute

Website: <http://www.olbi.uottawa.ca/en/cantest.php>

TESTcan

Université d'Ottawa , Faculté des arts

Institut des langues officielles et du bilinguisme

<http://www.ilob.uottawa.ca/fr/testcan.php>

122. I have taken one of the language tests. My scores are just under the minimum scores you require. Can you make an exemption?

We have a policy to consider the Standard Error of Measurement in some of the tests. If you did not obtain the minimum score, you may ask us to review and consider your score. You must send a written request directly to our office. After we have reviewed your request, we will tell you our decision.

123. Can I hand in my language test scores in person?

No. The testing institution must send your official language test scores to us. We will not accept them if we receive them from you. Contact our Client Services Coordinator if the testing institution tells you that they cannot send your test scores to us.



124. I want to have the Educational Testing Service (ETS) submit my TOEFL scores directly to The Alliance. What institutional code do I need?

Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators — 0015

125. Can I submit expired TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, MELAB, CanTEST or TSE results?

You can submit an expired test score if the document you send is an original. We will notify you in writing if you need to take the test again.

126. When is the deadline for language proficiency test results?

If you have successfully completed all parts of the credentialing process except for language proficiency, you will have a maximum of two (2) years from the date on your credentialing result letter to meet our language proficiency requirements and attempt the Written Component of the Physiotherapy Competency Examination.

127. I completed some credit courses in English/French during my program of study. The marks I obtained are listed on my transcripts. Can I use my transcripts instead of taking a language proficiency test?

No, you cannot use your transcripts for an exemption from the language proficiency test.

128. If I was educated in English or French, do I need to take an English or French proficiency test?

If any part of your physiotherapy education was in a language other than English or French, you must complete a language test.

If 100% of your physiotherapy education was in English or French, you may not need to complete a language test. You must send all supporting documentation to us when you apply for the assessment.

We must be able to confirm and verify that your entire physiotherapy education including your interaction with patients, colleagues, support staff, supervisors was in English or French.

Once we review and verify the supporting documents, we will let you know if you need to take a language test.

129. Do I need to take all four components of one language test or can I take the different components of different tests and submit all my score sheets?

All applicants who want to be considered for the exam process must meet the criteria for exemption or pass all four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking) of one of the approved language proficiency tests (TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, MELAB and CanTEST / TESTcan). For example, you can not take the listening and reading sections of the IELTS test and the writing and speaking



sections of the MELAB test. You must decide which test you would like to take and complete all four components of that test.

- 130. I completed one of the language tests. I obtained the minimum scores you need on three of the four components. Do I have to repeat all four components of the test or can I just repeat the component that I failed?**

You do not need to repeat a section of the language test if you have already obtained the minimum score we need on that section. You can repeat the other sections until you obtain the minimum scores we need for that section. You must however make sure that you take the section of the same test. You cannot mix and match section of different tests. You must also make sure that you meet the minimum total score we need on each test.

- 131. All of my physiotherapy school language of instruction was conducted in English, but patient care was not. Do I still have to take one of the language proficiency tests?**

Yes. If any part of your physiotherapy education was in a language other than English or French, you must take one of the language proficiency tests listed in the Credentialing Package. Please review the package.

APPEALS

- 132. Does The Alliance give feedback on assessment results in addition to the successful/unsuccessful outcome?**

We provide a written report that describes the reasons for an unsuccessful outcome and lists all the gaps we identified in your qualifications.

- 133. Does The Alliance provide opportunities to submit additional documentation?**

If your outcome is unsuccessful, we will give you a chance to provide additional documentation within 60 days. We can give you more time to submit documents if you need. You must send us a written request and explain why you require more time.

- 134. Does The Alliance provide an independent appeal process (in other words, one in which the people who decide the appeal are not the same people who made the original decision)?**

We provide an internal Administrative Reconsideration process and an independent appeal process for credentialing applicants whose outcome is unsuccessful. You will receive information on this process with your assessment results if your result is unsuccessful. Contact our Client Services Coordinator if you want this information now.



GLOSSARY

Accreditation

A process that determines whether a program or service meets a certain level of performance or standards. This term is used in industrialized countries. In many countries, there are no accreditation systems but there are various forms of recognition.

Competencies

Knowledge, skills and abilities obtained through learning (of all types) to perform occupational specific tasks and duties.

Course

A single unit of study offered by an educational institution.

Course Description

Documents that describe the content of a course. They include learning outcomes, objectives, textbooks and references. They may also include weekly schedules, contact hours, evaluation methods (in other words, information on the structure of exams) and other resources.

Credit

A unit of study or training;

OR

An objective and measurable indicator relating to skill level, knowledge and competency. Often, “standards” refers to a set of criteria and required skill levels.

Curriculum

A structured set of objectives, learning or educational activities organized for the purposes of teaching. It may include theoretical and training courses and practical training. It may also specify the time allotted for students to acquire specific knowledge and abilities.

Degree

The title awarded to a student who successfully completes a program of academic study in a university at the bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral level.

Qualification Recognition

A process of evaluating evidence provided by an applicant to determine if his or her qualifications are sufficiently similar to the established or published standard in the receiving country or jurisdiction.

Substantially Equivalent

There is reasonable confidence that education and qualifications are highly similar but not exactly the same.

Sufficiently Similar

The degree to which qualifications need to be the same or similar. Sometimes the receiving country (in our case, Canada) requires qualifications be the same, and sometimes they need to be substantially equivalent.



Syllabus

A detailed written description of a program of study and the courses it includes. A syllabus must describe the courses relevant to an applicant's years of study. (For example, if you started a four-year physiotherapy program in 1991, we will not accept a syllabus for any years other than 1991 to 1995 unless it is accompanied by an official letter from the institution confirming that the courses outlined in the syllabus submitted are the exact same courses completed by the applicant.)

Transcript

The official document or record of a student's enrolment, progress and achievement within an educational institution. The transcript contains your academic information from an institution and may include such information as your program of study, courses taken (which may include course names and/or course codes), credits/marks/grades achieved, any transfer credits awarded, names of credit and non-credit courses completed, repeated courses, disciplinary actions and credentials/degrees earned.

In some countries, the University is the only authority that can issue **Official** transcripts sometimes called Statement of Marks or Marksheets or Attested Marksheets.

