



CAPR
Canadian Alliance
of Physiotherapy
Regulators

ACORP
Alliance canadienne des
organismes de réglementation
de la physiothérapie

Credentiailling Policies

February 25, 2013

Revised May 9, 2013

Revised September 24, 2013

Revised May 8, 2014

Revised October 27, 2014

Revised December 13, 2018

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2.1 Credentialling Standards

Date Approved: November 30, 2012

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Date Revised: May 9, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialling process.

Principles: This policy has been designed in accordance with the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications principles of fairness, transparency, timeliness, and consistency, and in consideration of the minimum required standards of physiotherapy programs offered in Canada.

Purpose

The credentialling process involves comparing an internationally educated physiotherapist's education and credentials to that of a Canadian-educated physiotherapist in order to determine if there are substantial differences in the qualifications that would prevent the internationally educated physiotherapist from being eligible for the Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE).

Policy

In order to determine if an internationally-educated physiotherapist's training is substantially equivalent to that offered in Canada, the following five criteria must be met:

Criterion 1: Verification of Identity through authentic and valid documentation

Identity shall be checked and verified in accordance with the guidelines specified in the Credentialling Application Process Guide. If identity documentation or any other documentation is found to be irregular or fraudulent, the credentialling application shall be closed in keeping with Alliance Policy 2.3 Fraudulent/Irregular Documents and Cheating.

Criterion 2: Completion of a university level, entry-to-practice degree in physiotherapy

Completion of a university level, entry-to-practice degree (or credential by another name) in physiotherapy, awarded by a recognized institution authorized to issue credentials equivalent to a degree in Canada is required. Diplomas awarded by a non-university institution may be accepted if assessed and determined to be equivalent to at least a Bachelor's degree in Canada.

Criterion 3: Successful completion of a minimum of 1025 hours of supervised clinical education

As part of their university level, entry-to-practice degree in physiotherapy, credentialling applicants must have received at least 1025 hours of supervised clinical education, with at least 100 hours in musculoskeletal, 100 hours in neurological and at least 40 hours in cardiorespiratory conditions. This is sometimes called supervised clinical practice, or clinical internship, or clinical placement or practicum.

The number of hours (1025) is the minimum standard for Canadian physiotherapy programs as set by Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada.

Criterion 4: Fluency in English or French

CAPR requires that most internationally-trained physiotherapy students undergo mandatory language testing from one of CAPR's approved testing organizations. Applicants who have completed their physiotherapy education in certain countries are exempt from language testing. Please see Policy 2.2 Language Proficiency for details.

Criterion 5: Knowledge of the practice of physiotherapy within the Canadian healthcare system

CAPR requires that all applicants to the credentialling process take a course in the 'Context of Physiotherapy Practice in Canada'. This course must include a formal method of assessment that tests students on the course content. Information on Context of Physiotherapy Practice in Canada courses will be sent to the Applicant after the applicant's credentialling application has been processed.



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2.2 Language Proficiency Policy

Date Approved: September 14, 2012

Date Effective: April 4, 2013

Date Revised: December 13, 2018

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulator’s credentialling process.

Principles: As part of CAPR’s obligation to maintain high standards of quality and safety in physiotherapy practice, all internationally-trained physiotherapists must demonstrate proficiency in English or French as part of the credentialling process. This will ensure that physiotherapists licenced by CAPR’s members will have the language skills necessary to conduct their practice safely and effectively.

Purpose

To clarify the language standards required by CAPR to demonstrate minimum language proficiency.

CAPR encourages all applicants to check with their regional regulatory organization as each organization may have different language requirements.

Policy

- 1) To become licensed or registered, an applicant must be fluent in either English or French. If they completed their entry-to-practice physiotherapy education (both classroom and clinical portions) in Australia, United States of America, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, United Kingdom or France they do not need to complete a language proficiency test. If they completed their entire primary and secondary school education in Canada, they do not need to complete a language proficiency test.
- 2) Applicants from other international jurisdictions must complete all four components (writing, speaking, listening and reading) of one of the following language proficiency tests:

Written evidence of completion of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) based on the minimum scores in the following table.

Minimum Required Scores:

TOEFL Component: Internet-based Test (iBt)	Minimum Score
Listening	21
Structure/Writing.....	21
Reading	21
Speaking Test	21
Overall Score(not cumulative).....	92

OR

An average score on the CanTEST (standardized English proficiency test administered by University of Ottawa in Canada) of at least 4, with no component lower than 4, plus an oral interview rating of at least 4.5.

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OR

An overall score of at least 7 on the Academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The test must include all components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking.

OR

An average score on the TESTcan (standardized French proficiency test administered by University of Ottawa in Canada) of at least 4, with no component lower than 4, plus an oral interview rating of at least 4.5.

- 3) All scores, total scores and component scores, must meet minimum requirements in one sitting. Scores from multiples sittings cannot be combined to meet the language requirement.
- 4) The language testing agency must submit the official language scores directly to CAPR within two years of the test date. If CAPR receives an official language test result before an application, the test results must still be valid (i.e. less than two years old) at the time the application is received.
- 5) CAPR can begin credentialling assessments before receiving proof of language proficiency in English or French, but cannot complete the assessment or distribute the Final Results Letter until proof of language proficiency has been provided.

2.3 Fraudulent/Irregular Documents and Cheating

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialling process.

Principles: This policy has been designed in accordance with the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications principles of fairness, transparency, timeliness, and consistency, and in consideration of CAPR core values of protecting the public interest.

Purpose

To promote safety and quality of physiotherapy in Canada, all documents and test results submitted to CAPR as part of the credentialling process will be checked to confirm that they are valid and authentic.

Policy

All documents and test results submitted to the credentialling process by an applicant or on his or her behalf will be examined by a credentialling officer to confirm that they are authentic.

Fraudulent/Irregular Documents or Cheating

If a credentialling officer has reason to believe that documents or results are forged, fraudulent, altered, irregular, or involved cheating, then CAPR shall investigate. The applicant will be contacted to verify the information. If the applicant cannot provide a satisfactory explanation, the file will be closed. All documents received become the property of CAPR, and CAPR will notify the applicants or their representative and the credentialling agencies CAPR is partnered with. CAPR also reserves the right to inform its member Canadian regulators and the educational institution that supposedly issued the credentials.

If an application has been closed due to the finding of an irregular document or cheating, then the applicant is allowed to appeal the finding through the Administrative Reconsideration/Appeals process. Individual credentialling officers will be able to give instructions should applicants choose to apply for administrative consideration or appeal.

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Degree Mills or Diploma Mills

CAPR does not accept physiotherapy credentials from 'degree mills' or 'diploma mills'. Degree mills use names of non-existent universities, or establish a university without proper authorization, to sell documents that are not backed by appropriate study or examinations, and diploma mills sell documents not backed by appropriate study or examinations and operate without the supervision of a state or professional agency. Applicants found to possess physiotherapy credentials from such institutions will be subject to the penalties above.

If an applicant is found to have cheated or committed fraud in a way that does not impact the documents needed for credentialing, CAPR will continue the document assessment but will still notify its partners as stated above.

2.4 Notarized Copies

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialing process.

Principles: The credentialing process requires the submission of authentic diplomas, degrees or certificates in order to ensure only qualified individuals are deemed eligible to attempt the physiotherapy competency examination. Although original documents are least alterable, the acceptance of these documents can reduce the efficiency of the credentialing process.

Purpose

Issues with storage, security, potential damage to, and the return of original documents result in less efficient processing of applications. The purpose of this policy is to outline acceptable document authentication methods for copies in place of original documents.

Policy

CAPR does not accept original documents. All documents sent into CAPR, unless otherwise noted, must be notarized copies of original documents that have been made by a notary public. A notary public is an official who is authorized by the government to certify that copied documents are true copies of the original by applying his or her official signature and seal. A notary public will normally hold the specific title of notary public.

Notary Public is a specialized role that is recognized internationally. The following are **NOT EQUIVALENT** to a notary public:

- Justices of the Peace
- Commissioners of Oaths
- Commissioners of Declarations
- Embassy Officials
- Pharmacists
- Police Officers

In order to be acceptable to CAPR a notarized copy must include both the signature and seal of the notary public, along with information such as his or her address and phone number should CAPR need to contact them.

Fraudulent/Irregular Documents or Cheating

In situations involving applicants from countries which lack a notary public, CAPR will find an alternative method to verify copies of original documents, usually through having documents certified by the Canadian Embassy in that country. No applicant will be penalized for receiving their physiotherapy education in a country without a notary public.

CAPR makes no guarantees concerning original documents it has received, and will consider applications that include original documents instead of notarized copies as 'incomplete'.

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2.5 Translated Documents

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialling process.

Principles: CAPR receives documents and applications from all over the world. The credentialling process requires the submission of authentic and true translations into English or French in situations where the documents were not originally produced in either of these languages.

Purpose

As documents in languages other than English or French are often used to determine the competency and training of an internationally-educated physiotherapist, having authentic and dependable translations is necessary to ensure the correct information is considered.

Policy

There are three ways that translated documents can be submitted to CAPR:

1. Applicants, or their representatives, can have the documents that would normally be acceptable to be received from the applicant (e.g. degree, identity documents) translated by a certified translator and then sent to CAPR.
2. A university can forward documents translated by that university's official translator, along with the documents in the original language, directly to CAPR.
3. A university can forward un-translated documents, which will then be forwarded to the applicant to be translated by a certified translator and then sent directly to CAPR.

CAPR will not accept notarized copies of translations. All translations received by CAPR must be originals.

Definitions

CAPR will only accept translations performed by a certified translator, who are usually certified by a government organization, such as the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario. For international translators, CAPR standard is a translator who has been certified by a member organization of the International Federation of Translators.

In some countries a certified translator may be called an 'official' translator.

For further information, please refer to the Credentialling Application Process Guide.

2.6 Incomplete Applications

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialling process.

Principles: Complete documentation is required to assess credentials. Receiving multiple documents separately slows down the credentialling process for all applicants.

Purpose

All applications to CAPR credentialling program must be full and complete, with all documents required to be submitted by the applicant included in the proper format.

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Policy

To streamline the credentialing application process and improve overall response times, applications will not be processed by CAPR until all materials are received. Credentialing applications must be accompanied by all supporting documentation required from the applicant in order to be accepted. This does not include documents sent to CAPR directly from schools or language testing agencies. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.

2.7 Graduation Verification

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialing process.

Principles: Applicants may have finished all degree requirements and thus be eligible to apply for the credential assessment but may not have the degree in their possession due to the timing of graduation ceremonies. Factors such as this, which are beyond the applicant's control, should not create an unnecessary barrier to the applicant.

Purpose

CAPR requires verification of an applicant's graduation status prior to processing their application. This is normally provided through the receipt of a notarized copy and translation, where required, of the applicant's degree; however it is possible for an applicant to apply for the credentialing process after he or she has graduated but before receiving a diploma or degree.

Policy

With the Graduation Verification Form or official letter, CAPR may commence the credentialing assessment prior to receiving the final degree or diploma, but the assessment cannot be completed without the final degree or diploma. Assessment results letters cannot be released until the degree/diploma has been submitted, as the assessment is incomplete without this information.

2.8 Distance Learning

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Date Revised: May 8, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialing process.

Principles: The nature of the profession of physiotherapy requires that physiotherapists gain both clinical and theoretical knowledge and the ability to apply practical skills in the treatment of the patient.

Purpose

Distributed education and distance learning are becoming more common with advancing technology. This policy sets out the position of CAPR with respect to the use of these approaches in physiotherapy education programs.

Definitions

Distributed education is a broad concept that encapsulates all attempts to move education partway or completely away from the standard concept of a centralized campus. This includes methods such as virtual classrooms or setting up off-site classes.

Distance learning is a subset of distributed education that refers to information-technology assisted learning that occurs between professors and students who are separated by time or space.

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Background

Distributed education can make education more accessible, and has been used successfully within Canadian physiotherapy training programs; Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada has released a set of standards and guidelines dealing with distributed and distance learning. The most important of these is the principle of substantive equivalency, which states that even though there are unavoidable differences between traditional and distributed (including distance) learning, tools must be developed to ensure that students are evaluated equally. While this is possible with theoretical material it would be very difficult for courses that teach clinical material through hands-on experience, and CAPR has not yet been presented with an example of it being done successfully.

As clinical material is vital to the training of a physiotherapist, CAPR has concluded that an acceptable entry-level physiotherapy program cannot be taught entirely by distance learning methods.

Policy

It is the position of CAPR that an entry-to-practice physiotherapy degree cannot be entirely taught by distance learning. Courses in physiotherapy clinical practice must have onsite, in person laboratory components with the presence of an instructor. Additionally, clinical supervised practice placements or practicums must be delivered onsite with direct supervision.

Where an applicant has a recognized entry-to-practice level degree/diploma in physiotherapy, upgrading courses such as bridging or degree completion courses may be accepted if delivered by distance learning where these courses are not clinical practice courses.

This policy is not meant to discourage physiotherapy training institutions from integrating distributed learning components into traditional physiotherapy programs, and should not be interpreted as a stance against distributed learning itself.

2.9 Expiration of Credentialing Results

Date Effective: February 25, 2013

Scope: This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialing process.

Principles: The nature of the profession of physiotherapy requires that internationally educated physiotherapists maintain the currency of their skills and knowledge. The time a physiotherapist spends out of practice must be also be minimized to ensure a greater chance of success on the PCE and in the profession.

Purpose

It is important that an applicant attempt the exam as soon as possible after they successfully finish the credentialing process. This helps to ensure that an applicant's skills and CAPR's assessment remain current.

Policy

The results of a credentialing assessment remain valid for a period of two years. A credentialing applicant must address any outstanding issues and attempt the Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE) within two years of receiving a credentialing results letter. If an applicant fails to complete their first attempt of the written component of the PCE within this period, their file will be closed.

There are certain cases in which an applicant may be unable to attempt the exam within the two year period, such as financial inability to pay for the exam, or the inability to obtain a visa to come to Canada within the stated time period. Such applicants who have had the validity of their results expire will be required to apply for a New File Review in order to re-assess their eligibility to attempt the exam. A fee shall be charged for a New File Review and the file will be assessed using the most current standards in place at the time of the New File Review. Due to changing standards, there is no guarantee that the applicant will continue to be eligible as a result of the New File Review.

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2.10 Supervised Clinical Practice Hours

Date Approved: May 9, 2013**Date Effective:** May 9, 2013**Date Revised:** October 27, 2014**Scope:** This policy applies to all internationally-educated physiotherapists applying to CAPR's credentialing process.**Principles:** Minimum requirements for supervised clinical practice hours are necessary to ensure that clinical practical skills were attained and evaluated and represent the skills expected of a university trained graduate across the scope of practice present in the Canadian healthcare system.

Purpose

To provide clarity regarding the minimum requirements an applicant must have with respect to supervised clinical practice hours.

Definitions

Supervised clinical practice consists of supervised and evaluated experience as a physiotherapist-in-training within an entry to practice program, where the student gains practical experience and engages in a range of professional opportunities in various settings, for the purpose of learning and applying physiotherapy knowledge, skills, behaviours and clinical reasoning. Supervised clinical practice **does not** include academic classroom hours or practice on other students or staff. (Adapted from the 2011 Clinical Education Guidelines for Canadian University Programs.)

Policy

An applicant's entry to practice, university level physiotherapy degree must have a component of supervised clinical practice that consists of:

- A minimum of 1025 hours supervised clinical education in total, with
- A minimum of 100 hours in musculoskeletal, 100 hours in neurological and 40 hours in cardiorespiratory conditions.

Where an applicant has an entry-to-practice, university level degree in physiotherapy, the supervised clinical practice hours may be accepted from the following sources:

- The entry-to-practice, university level degree in physiotherapy from a recognized/accredited university;
- A college program in physiotherapy, whether recognized/accredited or not, but where the hours have been explicitly accepted as transfer credit by the recognized/accredited entry-to-practice, university level degree program in physiotherapy;
- A non-entry-to-practice Master's degree in physiotherapy from a recognized/accredited university.

Where an applicant does not meet the required hours of supervised clinical practice, they may be eligible to address these gaps by having worked hours as a physiotherapist recognized as prior learning when the applicant has:

- A minimum of 820 hours of supervised clinical education in total, and
- A minimum of 80 hours in musculoskeletal, 80 hours in neurological and 40 hours in cardiorespiratory conditions.