



Position Statement

Specialisation*

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) affirms the right of Member Organisations to make national policies which permit practice specialisation, where such activity is considered by them to benefit the public and the profession by promoting higher standards of physical therapy.

Where national physical therapy associations have adopted practice specialisation WCPT wishes to harmonise and co-ordinate the development of practice specialisation by adopting the following definitions and guidelines:

1. Physical therapy specialisation is the application of advanced clinical competence by a physical therapist qualified in a defined area within the scope of practice recognised as physical therapy.
2. The qualification of a physical therapist specialist will include a formal process for testing and acknowledging the appropriate advanced clinical knowledge and skills of the speciality. It is expected that the formal process will be fully documented.
3. Advanced clinical competence is the demonstration of knowledge and skills beyond those required for entry to basic professional practice.
4. A physical therapist specialist can demonstrate advanced clinical competence in a physical therapy speciality by satisfying the requirements for the formal recognition of his/her knowledge and skills by a Member Organisation or its accredited agent.
5. A physical therapy speciality is a prescribed area of physical therapy practice formally recognised by a Member Organisation within which it is possible for a physical therapist to develop and demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and skills. Specialisation is not to be considered or implied to mean a limitation or restriction of practice. The field of activity recognised as physical therapy will remain open to all appropriately qualified physical therapists both specialist and non-specialist practising within their respective levels of competence.

**Appendix follows on page 3*

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Date adopted:	Originally approved at the 13 th General Meeting of WCPT June 1995. Revised and re-approved at the 16 th General Meeting of WCPT June 2007
Date for review:	2011
Related WCPT Policies:	Position Statement: Description of physical therapy

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***Appendix to: Position Statement – Specialisation Guidelines for Specialisation**

The following guidelines are intended to help Member Organisations institute procedures for the qualification of physical therapist specialists.

The formal process of specialist qualification should provide for the following:

1. A board, council or committee of or accredited by the Member Organisation, specifically established and mandated to act in all matters concerned with the qualification of specialist physical therapists.
2. A board, council or committee of or accredited by the Member Organisation to establish and monitor the requirements of each recognised speciality.
3. The participation by representatives of recognised medical and other health professions as and when appropriate.

In addition, the formal process of specialist qualification should be open to all appropriately qualified physical therapists who meet the defined and published criteria of the responsible boards, councils or committees of or accredited by the Member Organisation.

In so far as the Member Organisation bears final responsibility for all matters concerned with specialisation, it has a duty to institute and publish appeals procedures which it or its accredited agent(s) will independently administer in the interest of individual or groups of physical therapists with a grievance in matters concerned with specialisation.