BACKGROUND TO REVIEW

The WCPT Education Policy and Guidelines Review (the Review) aims to use a collaborative process with WCPT member organisations, regions, subgroups and others to review and, where appropriate, update WCPT’s Education Policy Statement and the associated Guidelines, to ensure they reflect current good educational practice in physical therapy and support future developments.

This paper sets out key themes arising from a desk-top review and discussions with the WCPT’s Education Policy and Guidelines Review Expert Working Group (EPG-EWG) and makes recommendations.

It focuses on WCPT’s Education Guidelines, which are:

- WCPT guideline for delivering quality continuing professional development for physical therapists
- WCPT guideline for physical therapist professional entry level education
- WCPT guideline for qualifications of faculty for physical therapist professional entry level education programmes
- WCPT guideline for standard evaluation process for accreditation/recognition of physical therapist professional entry level education programmes
- WCPT guideline for the clinical education component of physical therapist professional entry level education


PROVIDING FEEDBACK

The EPG-EWG has endorsed the circulation of this consultation paper to the Executive Board, Accreditation Committee, member organisations, regions, subgroups and others. The purpose of the consultation is to seek stakeholders’ feedback on the recommendations in relation to the key themes arising from the desk-top review and EWG discussions.

Feedback can be provided to the Project Consultant by:

- completing an online version of the consultation questions by 28th September 2018. The survey can be accessed via this link: [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WCPT_ED_Guidelines](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WCPT_ED_Guidelines)

The Project Consultant will also be conducting electronic discussion groups with nominees of Member Organisations and education experts to explore the issues identified during the full consultation phase.
THE REVIEW

The first stage of this project was a desk-top review. WCPT Member Organisations (MOs) were asked to submit examples of educational guidance documentation and other relevant information. Permission was sought from education providers to analyse curricula for the purpose of this project. Other relevant documents were found via the internet. The diversity in terms of types of documentation and range of country of origin provided a useful overview of the type and content of guidance available.

A gap analysis and thematic analysis approach was taken and a number of key themes were identified. These have been discussed with the EPG-EWG and participants are asked to consider and respond to the recommendations below.

EDUCATION ISSUES

WCPT, as the global organisation representing the physical therapy profession, sets out expectations for entry level education and the ongoing development of qualified professionals. Whilst recognising that diversity exists, WCPT believes it is important to be clear about the minimum requirements of entry-level education that are required to produce a physical therapist, who meets the internationally agreed description of a physical therapist. Further to that these requirements are used to underpin the WCPT accreditation programme.

Theme 1. Style and Format

The Policy Statement and the five Guidelines exist as separate documents, with cross referencing. During the desk-top review, it has been considered how the Guidelines could be made more contemporary and user-friendly to ensure they are as effective as possible.

Recommendation:

Whilst the Education Policy Statement is a standalone document, it is **recommended** that it also be placed together with the five relevant Guidelines into an Education Framework document. An updated style should be used, with diagrams. Reference should be made to contemporary issues such as competencies, capabilities and thresholds.

Theme 2. Educational Infrastructure

The current guidelines do not make reference to organisational, quality and resourcing issues which are important for ensuring the curriculum is effective. These are important components of WCPT’s accreditation process.

Recommendation:

It is **recommended** that guidance should be included on issues such as the educational institution, policies, quality assurance mechanisms, benchmarking, resources and educational capabilities of academic teaching staff.
Theme 3. Inter-relationships

In the current guidelines, some opportunities to integrate concepts have been lost. Adding some explanation relating to inter-relationships may enhance the clarity of the guidelines. For example, the relationships between academic, intellectual and clinical skills in entry-level programmes; between professional standards and ethics and entry-level programme outcomes/competencies; between professional standards and ethics, scope of practice and continuing professional development (CPD).

Recommendation:

It is **recommended** that explanation should be included of:
- how academic and clinical skills and academic levels relate to each other
- how WCPT guidelines on professional standards relate to the entry-level curriculum
- the relationship between CPD, scope of practice and improvement of practice

Theme 4. Update of Content

The guideline for physical therapist professional entry-level education contains a list of assessment and interventions which may be used in curriculum development (appendix A). It is important that this list continues to reflect current practice while preparing students for future opportunities and developments, so it should be updated.

Recommendation:

It is **recommended** that the list is updated with suggestions from MOs and experts.

Theme 5. Continuing Professional Development

The current guideline for delivering quality continuing professional development for physical therapists is limited to guidance to member organisations on the provision of CPD. There is no reference to how CPD should impact on practice. The skill of reflection is not addressed anywhere in the current guidelines.

Recommendation:

It is **recommended** that the section on CPD should be expanded to include advice on how CPD can be used to improve practice, through the process of reflection. Further, it should support physical therapists to be critical consumers of CPD offerings.

It is **recommended** that development of the skill of reflection should begin in entry-level education programmes and therefore included in the guideline on the entry-level curriculum.