



Document type
Reference
Issuing function
Date of issue

INFORMATION PAPER
PD012A
PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT
JUNE 2010

Organising Periods of Adaptation Required by the Health Professions Council (HPC)

Advice for non-UK trained physiotherapists



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Advice for non-UK trained physiotherapists

Introduction

In order to be legally entitled to practise as a physiotherapist in the UK, you must be registered to do so by the Health Professions Council (HPC).

Physiotherapy education and practice varies according to the requirements of the population in each country and the way services are organised.

Periods of adaptation are sometimes necessary to address differences between your qualifying education and the requirements in the UK, where these differences are assessed as significant.

European Economic Area (EEA) Applicants

The European Economic Area (EEA) includes Member States of the European Union (EU)¹ and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)².

If you are an EEA applicant, the HPC will offer you a period of adaptation or an aptitude test, according to Directive 2005/36/EC on the mutual recognition of qualifications. The choice is yours.

The decision letter you receive will outline the HPC's requirements for a period of adaptation and may give you a time limit for completion. You may be asked to undertake adaptation in one or more specific areas of practice, for example respiratory care, neurology and/or musculoskeletal physiotherapy.

If you choose to undergo a period of adaptation and obtain a placement, you will be supervised by an experienced physiotherapy manager. On completion of the period of adaptation, it is the manager's responsibility to report back to the HPC regarding the outcome of your placement.

Non-EEA Applicants

If you are not an EEA applicant, you will still be able to work towards registration but the HPC procedure is different.

The decision letter you receive will advise you of any concerns against each of the standards of proficiency for physiotherapists, set out on the HPC website. (You should already have read these carefully before filling in your application form.)

¹ For a list of EU Member States (2010) visit http://europa.eu/abc/european_countries/index_en.htm

² EFTA Countries (2010) – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway



Find a physiotherapy manager who is willing to help you turn these concerns into learning objectives during a clinical placement.

All Applicants

The following sections of this paper apply to all applicants for registration.

If you have been asked to undertake a period of adaptation by the HPC, or if you are organising your own period of learning, it is **your responsibility** to find a suitable clinical placement or additional course of study, to meet the requirements. However the Society offers the following advice.

The UK Recruitment Context

Over the past few years the government greatly increased university places for physiotherapy students, but there were not enough jobs available when they qualified.

The situation is improving for new graduates. Managers are keen to provide jobs for UK graduates so that their training is not wasted.

You should be aware that competition for jobs is very keen, and that in the present financial climate job cuts are likely.

Identifying a Hospital Placement

You can find contact names and addresses of National Health Service (NHS) hospitals by visiting:

England

<http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>

Ireland

<http://www.n-i.nhs.uk/>

Scotland

<http://www.nhs24.com/content/>

Wales

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/>

Choosing the Location

Some people's family connections and obligations tie them to particular parts of the UK. However, it will be helpful if you can be flexible about location.

If you are not joining family, remember that London hospital accommodation is scarce and private property is expensive to rent.



If you can find a placement outside London, the cost of living will be lower and the pressures on clinical placements may be less acute.

Working as a Physiotherapy Support Worker (Physiotherapy Assistant)

If you can find a hospital willing to take you on as a support worker during your period of adaptation, this will be of mutual benefit to you and your employer. You will be gaining valuable experience about the UK health care system, plus some financial support as an employee. The cost of providing you with supervision will be offset by the work you do as a support worker, which benefits the employer.

There are two important points to note:

- The hours you work as a support worker and your period of adaptation must be kept separate. They are different activities. The support worker role will help you with general orientation to the UK health care system and use basic transferable skills, but it does **not** count towards the fulfilment of the HPC requirements.
- As a physiotherapy support worker, your role is to undertake tasks delegated to you by a registered Chartered Physiotherapist. (This is covered in an information paper – see Related Information on page 6)

Please note that support worker job vacancies are not plentiful. UK local newspapers are the best place to look for support worker job adverts, or you can contact hospitals directly to enquire about vacancies.

Overcoming Difficulties in Finding a Placement

Difficulties in finding a hospital willing to offer you a placement for a period of adaptation may arise for two reasons:

- Hospital work load pressures
- Your period of adaptation is longer than six to eight weeks

To reduce the load on an individual physiotherapy department, you could consider splitting your period of adaptation into its different parts. You would then look for a separate placement for each of the prescribed areas of practice.

Courses

The best way to meet the requirements of the HPC may sometimes be to follow a course. Some suitable short courses are listed below.



UK Physiotherapy: Confidence for practice

Location: Coventry University

Web: <http://store.coventry.ac.uk>: Short Courses: Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.

Course content: To update/consolidate the skills and knowledge of physiotherapists in practice methods and workplace culture across key areas of practice in the UK.

Suitable for: both UK trained returners and non-UK trained physiotherapists.

Day 1: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for clinicians

Day 2: The use of evidence based practice

Day 3: Cardio-respiratory

Day 4: Neuromusculoskeletal

Day 5: Neurology

Each day is a standalone module, and you can choose to purchase only the modules relevant to you.

Online booking only, via the above web link.

If you experience any problems with online booking, contact

Sally Parkes

Tel: +44(0)2476 7688 8554

Email: s.parkes@coventry.ac.uk.

Skills update for physiotherapists who qualified outside the UK

Location: Department of Allied Health Sciences, London South Bank University, Borough Road, London SE1 0AA

Course content: The program comprises 4 weeks of full-time study. 3-4 weeks are then allocated for revision, after which candidates attend the University for a day of assessment. Additional clinical placements may be required.

Applicants must hold IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Grade 7 English or equivalent.

No information on course dates for 2010 and beyond was available at the time of writing.

For help and advice about future courses and developments please contact:

Heather Holder-Powell

Tel: +44(0)020 7815 8369

Email: holderhm@lsbu.ac.uk

or

Miss Alison Skinner BA MCSP DipTP

Tel: +44(0)20 7288 5441 or +44(0)7727 605625 (Mobile)

Email: at.skinner@ucl.ac.uk



Related Information

The following information papers can be viewed or downloaded online, or you can request a printed copy from the CSP Enquiry Handling Unit (see Contacts below):

- PD012 Working in the UK – Information for Non-UK Trained Physiotherapists. Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (June 2010)
Details about the HPC, finding a job, work permits, joining the CSP
<http://www.csp.org.uk> then search for 'PD012'
- Supervision, accountability and delegation of activities to support workers: A guide for registered practitioners and support workers.
Intercollegiate information paper developed by the CSP, RCLST, BDA and RCN. London. (January 2006)
http://www.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/78720/003093.pdf

Contacts

The Health Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London SE11 4BU
Tel: +44 207 582 0866
Fax: +44 207 820 9684
Web: <http://www.hpc-uk.org>

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
International Development Adviser
Email: enquiries@csp.org.uk
Tel: +44 20 7306 6666
Fax: +44 20 7306 6611
Web: <http://www.csp.org.uk>

Enquiry Handling Unit
Email: enquiries@csp.org.uk
Tel: +44 20 7306 6666