

## **The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)**

### **CSP Education Position Statement:**

#### **Expectations of pre-registration professional/taught doctorate degrees**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) has produced this position statement recognising the increasing trends for universities to develop professional/taught doctorate programmes that provide an entry route into the UK physiotherapy profession.
2. We also recognise the increasing trend for higher education institutions (HEIs) to develop programmes that form a mix of pre- and post-registration learning. These programmes enable students to qualify and register as a physiotherapist in the UK through a taught postgraduate programme and then to progress directly to a period of supervised postgraduate research at post-registration level and through which they obtain a professional or taught doctorate.
3. The CSP welcomes both forms of doctoral programmes within and for the profession.

#### **Purpose**

4. The purpose of this statement is to
  - Assert CSP expectations, including to uphold and progress professional and education standards for UK physiotherapy
  - Clarify the CSP's particular expectations of doctoral programmes for conferring programme accreditation
  - Seek to achieve due consistency of approach in developing doctorate-level programmes within and for the profession, while also allowing for institutional flexibility and individual programmes' distinctiveness
  - Support developments and innovations in programme design, in response to changing workforce, service and population/patient needs.

#### **Intended audiences**

5. The intended audiences of this statement are as follows:
  - HEI teams considering or actively progressing the development of professional/taught doctorates in physiotherapy that form or partly form an entry route into the profession
  - CSP members with a particular interest in educational developments within the profession
  - Prospective students considering options for entering the UK physiotherapy profession
  - External stakeholders, including HEIs, regulators and policy-makers, with an interest in entry routes into the UK physiotherapy profession.

## **Context**

1. Professional doctorates are well-established at post-registration level in physiotherapy and related areas (with the first profession-specific doctorate having been set up in 2003).
2. Doctorate level entry to the physiotherapy profession exists in some other countries (e.g. the USA). At the same time, the CSP recognises that doctorate degree requirements in different countries are not necessarily the same.
3. We are keen to support and encourage a diversity of entry routes into the profession in the UK. At the same time, we need to ensure that all entry routes, regardless of their academic level (whether Bachelor's, Master's or doctorate), provide a high-quality learning experience and enable individuals to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attributes required for registration and practice as a physiotherapist in the UK.
4. As part of this diversity, we are keen to support the development of programmes that combine supporting and enabling individuals' entry to the UK physiotherapy profession in ways that also contribute to developing research capacity and capability within the physiotherapy workforce. Doctorate programmes are of clear, particular value in this context.

## **CSP expectations**

5. We expect professional doctorate programmes presented for CSP accreditation to address the elements outlined below. These relate to specific features of doctorate degrees. We also expect programmes to fulfil our standard requirements for accreditation.

## **Essential criteria**

6. A programme needs to fulfil CSP expectations of all pre-registration programmes to secure CSP accreditation and HCPC requirements for approval.
7. A programme needs to conform to standard academic requirements for professional/taught doctorate programmes; i.e. in terms of fulfilment of QAA criteria, etc.
8. A programme needs to enable all students to complete a minimum of 1000 hours' practice-based learning within the part of the programme that leads to qualification and registration as a physiotherapist.
9. It needs to be clear how the practice-based learning components can be fulfilled while also fully meeting the academic requirements for the award.
10. The programme's structure needs to be defined clearly; this includes the stage at which individuals become eligible to apply for registration in order to practise as a physiotherapist in the UK.
11. In line with the above, it needs to be clear whether, depending on the programme design and structure, eligibility for registration as a physiotherapist is on completion of the taught and practice-based learning components of the programme (and therefore prior to completion of the supervised research component), or on completion of the whole, integrated programme (i.e. the taught, practice-based and supervised research components).

## **Programme rationale and positioning**

12. The rationale for the programme needs to be explained, including in terms of the particular learning opportunities it offers to students and the particular knowledge and skills that the programme develops in relation to current and projected workforce needs.

13. The market for the programme needs to be explained, including in terms of how the programme responds to learner and workforce/employer needs, and how the demand/market for the programme has been tested through appropriate forms of consultation and intelligence-gathering.
14. As part of the above, it needs to be clear what consideration (including with local service providers, and with national bodies and networks) has been given to the career development opportunities available to programme graduates, and how the programme contributes to physiotherapy workforce supply at a local, regional and national level.
15. The place of the programme within the university's strategic and business plans needs to be clear.
16. As part of the above, it needs to be clear whether and how the recruitment of international students forms a significant intention, with an explanation given both of the value of this and how it sits in the context of meeting national workforce supply needs.

### **Programme design and characteristics**

17. It needs to be clear what value the programme provides in preparing students for entry to the physiotherapy profession, including how its characteristics fulfil requirements for CSP accreditation and HCPC approval.
18. The 'added value' of the programme needs to be explained in terms of the opportunities for enhanced learning that it provides; this needs to include in terms of additional research skills development and broader opportunities to develop and demonstrate doctorate level learning (e.g. in relation to professional leadership) and the broader benefits that this should provide to the profession, service delivery and patient care.
19. It needs to be clear how, through the programme's development and delivery, the HEI is developing strengthened links with local/other service providers to support and inform the research components of the programme (including the research projects that students are enabled to pursue).
20. As part of the above, it needs to be explained how service colleagues are enabled to inform the research questions that students address through their project work and in ways that contribute to service evaluation, continuous improvement and innovation.
21. It needs to be clear how students' learning at different academic levels is supported and developed within the programme.
22. As well as ensuring fulfilment of credit requirements for doctorate awards, it needs to be clear how students are enabled and expected to demonstrate learning at different academic levels in different elements of the programme and, as they progress through the programme, how they are supported with the additional challenges that learning at different levels is likely to pose.

### **Programme resources**

23. It needs to be clear that the HEI has the human, physical and practice-based learning resources to sustain the programme's delivery; this includes to support and enable learning at doctorate level and to deliver the programme in tandem with other physiotherapy pre-registration education provision.
24. The staff development plan needs to be explained for ensuring the programme's sustainability and quality, including in terms of ensuring sufficient numbers of staff with doctorate-level qualifications themselves to support the programme's

development and delivery and therefore the development of students' learning and research activity.

25. It needs to be explained how staff capacity will be developed over time to support the programme's delivery to multiple cohorts of students (in addition to other physiotherapy pre-registration education provision).
26. While respecting it is for the HEI to set its postgraduate fee levels in realistic, proportionate ways, it needs to be clear that the fee set for the programme is both sufficient to sustain the quality of the programme and not likely to deter potential students from all parts of society.

### **Student admission and progression**

27. The entry requirements for the programme need to be explained; it needs to be clear how it is ensured that entrants have the knowledge, skills and apparent potential to study at doctorate level successfully and to qualify/gain registration as a physiotherapist.
28. It needs to be clear how individuals are admitted to the programme.
29. It needs to be clear how, once enrolled, students are enabled to progress through the programme.
30. Information needs to be provided on interim exit points/awards that do not give eligibility for registration.
31. It needs to be clear how students gain eligibility for registration as a physiotherapist in the UK; it is expected that this is at the end of the programme, unless the programme is a hybrid pre- and post-registration programme.

### **Award and title**

32. The programme award and title need to articulate clearly the level and nature of the qualification.
33. In particular, it needs to be clear the award that gives graduates the basis for applying for registration in the UK to practise as a physiotherapist, with a clear indication as to which components and stages of the programme provide eligibility to apply for registration.
34. The titles of awards conferred on individuals who exit the programme at an interim point need to be such that they cannot be confused with a registrable qualification to practise as a physiotherapist in the UK.

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