

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)

Guidance on CSP expectations of delivery of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship

Introduction

1. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) has produced this position statement recognising that degree apprenticeships form a new entry route into the physiotherapy profession. We see this as a welcome development, providing that the quality of apprentices' learning experience and outcomes are upheld and that the learning provision created adheres to CSP requirements for accreditation and HCPC requirements for approval.
2. In line with the approved standard, both CSP accreditation and HCPC approval are required for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship degree to be run.
3. There are also several novel aspects relating to apprenticeships for all parties. We welcome feedback on this version of the guidance (including gaps), so that we can enhance its usefulness.

Purpose of the statement

4. The purpose of the statement is to
 - Assert CSP expectations of degree apprenticeship provision that forms an entry route into the profession, including to uphold and progress professional and education standards for UK physiotherapy
 - Clarify the CSP's particular expectations of degree apprenticeships for conferring CSP accreditation
 - Contribute to achieving appropriate consistency of approach in how the physiotherapist degree apprenticeship is delivered, while enabling due flexibility and distinctiveness (including in line with employer needs)
 - Support developments and innovations in physiotherapy pre-registration education, including in response to changing workforce, service and population/patient needs.

Intended audiences

5. The intended audiences of this statement are as follows:
 - Higher education institution (HEI) teams and employers considering or actively progressing plans to deliver the physiotherapist degree apprenticeship

- CSP members with a particular interest in educational developments within and for the profession
- Individuals considering options for entering the UK physiotherapy profession
- External stakeholders, including HEIs, employers, regulators and policy-makers, with an interest in entry routes into the UK physiotherapy profession.

Context

6. The CSP recognises that the physiotherapist degree apprenticeship provides an entry route into the profession. We see this as a positive development, providing that the quality of apprentices' learning experience and outcomes are upheld and adhere to CSP and HCPC requirements.

7. At the time of writing, the following have either occurred, or are awaited:

- The CSP has been directly involved in the trailblazer group for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship, advising on the development of the standard and assessment plan
- The standard for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship has been approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)
- The published standard has been approved for delivery at level 6 (honours degree level) and level 7 (Master's level) pre-registration physiotherapy is also permissible
- The assessment plan details the integrated end-point assessment (EPA) for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship
- The banding tariff for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship is set at a maximum of £24,000
- QAA will be managing the external quality assurance (EQA) – this is similar to non-apprenticeship physiotherapy programmes

Key expectations

8. A proposal for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship needs to demonstrate the following:

- Fulfilment of CSP expectations of all pre-registration physiotherapy education programmes in order to secure CSP accreditation (as well as HCPC requirements for approval)
- Fulfilment of standard academic requirements for the award of the academic qualification underpinning it (in line with what has been agreed by the IfATE, underpinning pre-registration education qualifications can either be at level 6 or 7)

- How all apprentices will be enabled to complete the requisite 1000 hours' practice-based learning, reflecting a diversity of learning experiences to cover the breadth and depth required for preparation for practice as a physiotherapist in the UK
- How delivery will meet all specified requirements of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship, including as detailed in the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan and in line with the requirements for all apprenticeships
- Fulfilment of standard requirements for HEIs' registration as an apprenticeship education provider and an assessor (if the HEI plans also to act in this role)
- Assurance that the way the apprenticeship will be delivered in partnership with specific employers will adhere to quality employment principles both for the apprentices themselves and for staff acting as their workplace supervisors, mentors and assessors.

Rationale and positioning

9. The rationale for offering the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship needs to be explained. This includes in terms of

- Meeting workforce development needs
- Providing a high-quality learning experience for apprentices that will enable the fulfilment of education and professional standards
- Providing enhanced opportunities as an entry route into the physiotherapy profession, including from the perspective of widening access and participation from all parts of society and helping to address employers' needs relating to sustainable workforce supply and recruitment and retention
- Responding to current and projected population, patient and service needs.

10. The market for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship needs to be explained. This includes in terms of how

- It will respond to learner and workforce/employer needs
- The market or demand has been tested through appropriate forms of consultation and intelligence-gathering.

11. The place of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship within the HEI's strategic and business plans needs to be clear. This includes in terms of the following:

- How delivery of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship will fit with the institution's wider provision of degree apprenticeships broadly, and in healthcare more particularly
- How delivery of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship will fit with the institution's other existing pre-registration physiotherapy education provision; this

includes in terms of whether it will be run in tandem with or instead of other provision and, if the former, how the two types of provision will appropriately be aligned (e.g. in terms of shared resources and learning opportunities)

- How the institution has engaged with employers to progress planned arrangements for delivering the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship, including in terms of potential agreements in principle to respond to employers' physiotherapy workforce development needs (recognising that the progression of formal arrangements with employers will need to be subject to contracting and procurement arrangements for apprenticeships and the validation, approval and accreditation of the programme, and that it may be other employers that procure the apprenticeship after it is ready for delivery).

Design and characteristics

12. The design of the degree apprenticeship's delivery needs to be explained. This includes through provision of information on the following:

- The distinctive education philosophy of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship and its delivery, including in terms of its optimisation of the benefits of work-based learning for apprentices' development, while fulfilling academic and professional requirements
- The distinctive features of the proposals for the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship's delivery, including to uphold the quality of apprentices' learning experience and outcomes and to optimise the benefits of the apprenticeship model (e.g. in terms of widening participation/access to the profession, work-based learning, and helping employers to address their workforce supply needs)
- How the structure and pattern of delivery of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship will enable apprentices to
 - Make a logical, transparent progression in their learning across the whole of the apprenticeship and with all elements appropriately integrated within their overall learning process
 - Ensure that robust arrangements are in place for the supervision of apprentices' learning within the apprenticeship; this includes in engaging in their 'on-the-job' learning to ensure the quality of their learning experience and outcomes, with due clarity regarding their status, their delivery of safe and effective care to patients and appropriate levels of support to staff who will be acting as their work-based supervisors, mentors and assessors
 - Develop their competence and their independence as a learner, with this duly reflected in the supervision arrangements and learning support put in place, and recorded in their portfolio
 - Enhance their contribution to service delivery and patient care over the course of the apprenticeship (e.g. in relation to development of their clinical-reasoning and decision-making skills, clinical skills, communication skills and critical use of the evidence base)

- Access high-quality 'off-the-job' learning, including to ensure its strong integration into and support for their progression through the apprenticeship and to ensure the most practical arrangements for employers (including in organising backfill)
- How the institution will work in partnership with employers and apprentices to ensure that apprentices' dual status as an employee and learner is appropriately clear for all parties; this includes how apprentices will be factored into the support worker workforce and contribute to service delivery; how they will be supported to engage in and record their on-the-job learning, and how they will be enabled and supported to engage fully in their off-the-job learning (including in the context of service delivery pressures within their workplace)
- How the requirement that apprentices complete the requisite 1000 hours of practice-based learning through the duration of the apprenticeship (prior to progressing through the gateway to undertake the EPA) will be integrated into the design of the apprenticeship's delivery; this includes in terms of how this will be attained through a mix of on-the-job supervised learning and off-the-job supervised practice-based learning (including through practice education placements undertaken by apprentices in practice environments outside those of their employer to ensure that each apprentice gains the breadth and depth of learning required to qualify as a physiotherapist)
- How the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship will be delivered, including in terms of how
 - Apprentices' off-the-job learning will be structured within the programme (e.g. whether the minimum of 20% off-the-job learning will be delivered on a weekly or block-release basis)
 - The planned delivery fits with intelligence gained on preferred learning models, access to learning support, and employers' practical needs for releasing apprentices from their contribution to service delivery
 - The institution plans for some of apprentices' off-the-job learning to be supported and assessed by employers' appropriately experienced, trained and supported staff and, if so, how these arrangements will be defined in planned contractual arrangements
- How the EPA will be integrated into the degree programme; in the case of existing provision being adapted to meet requirements for delivery as an apprenticeship, it needs to be clear how appropriate changes are being made and how the implications of these will be managed (e.g. in terms of the impact of the 20 credits attributed to the EPA on the structure and credit allocation for the degree award)
- Whether and how the institution (if registered as an assessor organisation) plans to conduct the EPA for its Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship apprentices, recognising that staff acting as assessors will need to meet IfA requirements and not to have had a direct involvement in the apprenticeship's delivery (and therefore apprentices' learning)

- How delivery of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship will be accommodated within the institution's standard schedule for learning and teaching activity; this includes in terms of academic and pastoral support for apprentices across the calendar year, apprentice enrolment and projected completion points, and the scheduling of the EPA in relation to examination boards.

13. It needs to be clear how the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship will be delivered such that all apprentices will be enabled to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) in ways that fully align with the apprenticeship standard. The programme elements should be directly mapped to the KSBs as set out in the standard.

14. It should be explored how the content of the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship will respond to areas of current or projected increasing significance within physiotherapy practice. As examples, this might be in response to the needs of an ageing population, more patients with multiple long-term conditions, more service delivery within primary care, or the development of strengthened research, business or leadership skills. At the same time, it needs to be clear how the programme will enable apprentices to meet the requirements for newly-qualified physiotherapy practice across the breadth of UK physiotherapy (and including in areas such as engagement in evidence-based practice and the development of research skills).

Resources

15. It needs to be explained how the HEI has the human and physical resources to manage, co-ordinate and sustain delivery of the Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship. This includes in relation to the following:

- The tariff banding allocated to the apprenticeship, while ensuring that education and professional standards are maintained
- The institution's other physiotherapy pre-registration education and wider healthcare provision, including in terms of how apprentices' access to learning and teaching resources (both human and physical) will be co-ordinated and/or integrated with other provision
- The maintenance of strong links with employers with which the institution contracts to provide the apprenticeship to their employees, with an indication of the agreements in principle secured for this ahead of the apprenticeship's validation/approval/accreditation
- More specifically, how practice-based learning opportunities will be appropriately secured and co-ordinated for both apprentices and students on 'conventional' pre-registration programmes, such that the supply for each does not work in competition with the other

- How the physiotherapy education team will be supported in developing their confidence and skills in leading and delivering the apprenticeship, including through being enabled to develop links with colleagues in the institution and beyond with equivalent roles and responsibilities and those with apprenticeship-specific expertise (e.g. in relation to contracting and procurement)
- How employers' staff will be supported in developing their skills in supporting and assessing apprentices' learning
- How strong links with apprentices will be maintained, such that they feel supported by the institution in their learning progression, developing links with their apprenticeship cohort, and from a pastoral perspective
- How the HEI has, or will create, the capacity to sustain the apprenticeship's delivery when it has multiple cohorts of apprentices, including in tandem with other physiotherapy pre-registration education provision.

Admission and progression

16. It needs to be clear how employers and prospective apprentices will be supplied with sufficient and appropriate information to understand the design, length, demands and implications of undertaking the apprenticeship, so that they can make an informed decision about whether the apprenticeship is suitable and of interest.

17. It needs to be clear how the HEI will be involved in employers' processes for recruiting individuals to the apprenticeship, including in terms of how prospective apprentices will be required/enabled to demonstrate that they have the potential to complete the apprenticeship successfully.

18. It needs to be clear how the recruitment process will determine whether prospective apprentices will need to be enabled to fulfil standard apprenticeship requirements while progressing through the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship; i.e. if they would need to gain a level 2 qualification in Mathematics or English before being eligible to progress through the gateway to the EPA.

19. It needs to be clear how consideration would be given to whether individual apprentices could appropriately be given advanced standing on the apprenticeship, including through the accreditation of prior learning. It needs to be explained how arrangements would be made that fulfil the following:

- The HEI's academic regulations requirements for accrediting prior learning and/or conferring advanced standing on a programme
- The CSP's requirement that each apprentice normally completes 1000 hours of practice-based learning prior to the gateway to the EPA
- The Institute for Apprenticeships' requirement that all apprentices complete an apprenticeship of a minimum of 12 months' duration

- Each apprentice being enabled to demonstrate fulfilment of the KSBs within the Physiotherapist Degree Apprenticeship.

20. The criteria and processes for determining apprentices' satisfactory progression through the apprenticeship needs to be supplied and how the HEI would have appropriate input to decisions on providing apprentices with additional support to progress through the apprenticeship successfully.

Award, title and exit points

21. It needs to be clear the qualification with which apprentices will attain through successful completion of the programme. In line with HCPC guidance, it needs to be clear whether the intended award carries the same title as awards conferred on students on established pre-registration education programmes, or is different.

22. The nature of interim exit points at which apprentices may leave the apprenticeship needs to be clear. In particular, it needs to be clear how interim awards provide due recognition of the learning successfully completed, but do not denote successful completion of the apprenticeship in its entirety, and do not give eligibility for registration as a physiotherapist in the UK.

[24th July 2020]