

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

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

### **Expectations of pre-registration integrated Master's degrees**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) has produced this position statement in recognition of the increasing number of universities exploring the development and delivery of four-year (or usually five years in Scotland) integrated Master's pre-registration programmes in physiotherapy. We see this as a welcome development for the profession.

#### **Purpose of the statement**

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

#### **Intended audiences**

3. The intended audiences of this statement are as follows:
  - Higher education institution (HEI) teams considering or actively progressing the development of an integrated Master's degree programme in physiotherapy
  - CSP members with a particular interest in educational developments within and for 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**

4. The CSP recognises that integrated Master's degrees are well-established in other academic disciplines and professions (e.g. engineering and some science subjects). We are also keen to ensure that Master's level entry routes into the profession continue. These have played a valuable role in UK physiotherapy for over twenty years. They enable newly-qualified physiotherapists to enter and contribute to professional practice with enhanced levels of knowledge and skills, particularly in the areas of critical thinking, problem-solving, research and leadership.

5. We expect the same types of knowledge and skills development to be afforded via integrated Master's degrees, with the prospect and potential for additional enhancements to students' learning in particular areas of practice.
6. In the context of uncertain funding arrangements for two-year pre-registration Master's degrees in England, we are keen to ensure that HEIs are enabled to continue to offer postgraduate routes into the profession, and that these routes remain available to students and future members of the profession. This includes to ensure the profession's responsiveness to changing patient, service and workforce needs and that Master's level pre-registration routes remain a feasible and attractive option for prospective students from all parts of society.

### **CSP expectations**

7. We expect integrated Master's degree programmes presented for CSP accreditation to address the elements outlined below. These relate to specific features of integrated Master's degrees. We also expect programmes to fulfil our standard requirements for accreditation.

### **Essential criteria**

8. A programme needs to fulfil CSP expectations of all pre-registration programmes to secure CSP accreditation and HCPC requirements for approval.
9. A programme needs to conform to standard academic requirements for integrated Master's programmes; i.e. in terms of fulfilment of QAA and credit framework criteria, etc., and including in relation to the volume and level of credit that the programme enables students to accrue.
10. A programme needs to enable all students to complete a minimum of 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.

### **Programme rationale and positioning**

11. The rationale for the programme needs to be explained; this includes in terms of the particular enhanced learning opportunities that it offers to students and the particular knowledge and skills that graduates will possess in response to current and projected population, patient, service delivery and workforce needs.
12. The market for the programme needs to be explained; this includes in terms of how the programme responds to learner and workforce/employer needs, and how the market/demand for the programme has been tested through appropriate forms of consultation and intelligence-gathering.
13. The place of the programme within the HEI's strategic and business plans needs to be clear.

### **Programme design and characteristics**

14. It needs to be clear whether the programme provides a singular route to the Master's award, or whether it is possible for students to opt to complete either a BSc(Hons) or a Master's degree at a certain point in their progression through the programme.
15. If there is more than one progression route through the programme, it needs to be clear the point in the programme's structure at which a student's pathway and intended end award needs to be confirmed (e.g. at the point of entry, or at a particular point in the programme).

16. The criteria and process for determining students' progression needs to be supplied if there is more than one progression route available.
17. It needs to be clear how the fourth year of study (or fifth in Scotland) adds value to the pre-registration programme; this includes in terms of the enhanced learning opportunities it offers to students, and how these are responsive to particular population, patient, service and workforce needs.
18. More specifically, it needs to be explained how the extended length of the programme enables students to develop their learning above and beyond fulfilling expectations of all pre-registration education provision for securing accreditation and HCPC requirements for securing approval, and how this is communicated to applicants, students, practice educators and employers.
19. It also needs to be clear how the extended length of the programme enables students to develop their knowledge and skills in ways that fit with 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).
20. At the same time, it needs to be clear how the programme, while providing opportunities for enhanced learning, enables students to meet the requirements for newly-qualified practice across the breadth of UK physiotherapy.
21. In line with the above, it needs to be clear that a programme neither involves a narrowing or specialisation that would not prepare students to meet the requirements for registration as a physiotherapist in the UK, nor enables the development of advanced practice knowledge and skills that is not feasible or appropriate at pre-registration level.

### **Programme resources**

22. It needs to be explained how the HEI has the human and physical resources, and access to sufficient practice-based learning capacity, to sustain the programme's delivery; this includes in tandem with the institution's other physiotherapy pre-registration education provision.
23. It needs to be clear that the HEI has the research capacity within its physiotherapy (and related) staffing to support students studying for an integrated Master's level award.
24. It needs to be clear how the HEI has, or will create, the capacity to sustain the programme's delivery when it has multiple (i.e. up to four or five) cohorts of students progressing through the programme (and other physiotherapy pre-registration education provision) at any one time.

### **Student admission and progression**

25. It needs to be clear how applicants are supplied with sufficient and appropriate information to understand the length, demands and implications of the programme, including in terms of all relevant costs, so that they are able to make an informed decision about whether to enrol on the programme if they are offered a place.
26. It needs to be clear how individuals are considered for admission to the programme, including in terms of how prospective students are required/enabled to demonstrate that they have the potential to complete the programme successfully.
27. It needs to be clear how, once enrolled, students are enabled to progress through the programme and to establish their aptitude for/choice of exit point, if there is more than one (e.g. this might appropriately be at during the second year of study).

28. It needs to be clear how the programme design and possible exit points (if there is more than one) enable students to meet the CSP's practice-based learning requirements, whether or not they opt to graduate with a BSc(Hons) or a Master's degree.
29. It needs to be clear how the programme gives students eligibility for registration as a physiotherapist in the UK; for students progressing through the complete Master's route, it is expected that eligibility for registration comes at the end of the complete programme (otherwise, we would consider that the programme is a 'hybrid' of pre- and post-registration learning, and that the registrable qualification is the BSc(Hons) degree).
30. Interim exit points from the programme (that do not give eligibility for registration) need to be clear; this includes in terms of their level and title, and so that it is evident that they do not form a registrable qualification.

### **Programme award and title**

31. The programme award and title should clearly articulate the level and nature of the qualification.
32. It needs to be clear that the award gives the individuals on whom it is conferred the basis for applying for registration in the UK to practise as a physiotherapist; e.g. MPhysiotherapy.
33. It needs to be explained how consideration has been given to how the award title will potentially be interpreted by students/graduates, employers, patients and the public, and how the potential for misrepresentation or misinterpretation has been guarded against.
34. In line with the above, it needs to be clear that the qualification provides eligibility to practise as a physiotherapist (subject to registration) and, if appropriate, may convey that the programme provides the opportunity for enhanced learning in a particular area that relates directly to physiotherapy practice.
35. 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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