



Coursework Evaluation Tool For Foreign Educated Physical Therapists

("Coursework Evaluation Tool")

Fourth Edition
Effective April 2008

Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy
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Table of Contents

OVERVIEW/PURPOSE.....	2
OVERVIEW	3
EVALUATION CHECKLIST	5
DEFINITIONS.....	14
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	17
BACKGROUND.....	18

INTRODUCTION

The Coursework Evaluation Tool for Foreign Educated Physical Therapists (herein referred to as “the Tool”) was developed for the purpose of evaluating the coursework of persons who received their physical therapist education outside the United States. It was developed by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) in response to the needs of its member jurisdictions for a standardized method to evaluate the educational equivalence of foreign educated physical therapists.

The Tool sets a minimum standard for the educational requirements of foreign educated physical therapists; it reflects the minimum general and professional educational requirements for substantial equivalence in all respects to a U.S. first professional degree in physical therapy. The minimum number of credits are reviewed and adjusted as major shifts occur within U.S. educational programs. These shifts do not reflect any changes in content requirements.

The Tool is used to determine qualifications for prescreening certification for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). It is also designed to be used by credentialing organizations and education programs. In addition, the Tool may be used as a self-evaluation method to guide foreign educated physical therapists in comparing their education to U.S. standards.

OVERVIEW/PURPOSE

As one component of the process used to determine if a foreign educated person has adequate preparation to practice as a physical therapist in the U.S., the individual's course of study shall be evaluated using the following Coursework Evaluation Tool. It is recommended that this Tool be utilized widely by applicants, jurisdiction boards, credentials reviewers and any other individuals who may have an interest in the credentials review of foreign educated physical therapists. This Tool should not be interpreted as the sole determinant of an individual's educational preparation or competence to practice.

The Tool reflects the content included in the first professional degree required of a CAPTE accredited program and required of a physical therapist who desires to pursue licensure to practice in the U.S.

As of April 2008, the Tool requires a minimum of 150 semester credit hours. A minimum of 60 semester credit hours are required in general education courses and a minimum of 90 semester credit hours are required in professional education courses. Specific coursework or content is also required to satisfy the minimum credit hour requirement in areas of general and professional education.

A semester hour of credit is equal to fifteen (15) hours of classroom instruction per semester. Courses with a laboratory component are awarded a semester hour of credit for each thirty (30) hours of laboratory instruction per semester. For clinical education courses, a semester hour of credit is equal to forty-eight (48) hours of clinical internship experience per semester.

Some jurisdictions may require a greater number of semester credit hours in either general or professional education as part of their requirements for licensure. The Tool remains applicable in those circumstances as long as the minimum course requirements have been met.

OVERALL EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

The applicant must meet the requirement of not less than one hundred-fifty (150) semester credit hours as a prerequisite. The minimum coursework requirements, in and of themselves, do not necessarily satisfy the requirements of the first professional degree in physical therapy. The applicant must have completed sufficient credit to satisfy the requirement for a post - baccalaureate degree. The applicant must also meet any jurisdiction-specific requirements.

Sixty (60) semester credits shall be the minimum number required in general education in the areas of humanities, physical science, biological science, social science, behavioral science, and mathematics. A minimum of a one-semester course must be successfully completed in each area of general education unless otherwise noted. General Education is defined as non-physical therapy coursework.

Note: Some jurisdictions may require more than sixty (60) semester credits. The applicant must meet the specific requirements in the jurisdiction where they are seeking licensure.

GENERAL EDUCATION

1. Humanities

- a. English
- b. English composition
- c. Speech or oral communication
- d. Foreign language (other than native language)
- e. Literature
- f. Art
- g. Music

2. Physical Science

- a. Chemistry with laboratory (two courses required)
- b. Physics with laboratory (two courses required)
- c. Geology
- d. Astronomy

3. Biological Science

- a. Biology
- b. Anatomy
- c. Physiology
- d. Zoology
- e. Kinesiology
- f. Neuroscience
- g. Genetics

4. Social Science

- a. History
- b. Geography
- c. Sociology
- d. Economics
- e. Political science
- f. Religion

5. Behavioral Science

- a. Psychology (one course required)
- b. Anthropology
- c. Philosophy
- d. Ethics

6. Mathematics

- a. Statistics
- b. Algebra
- c. Pre-calculus
- d. Calculus
- e. Trigonometry
- f. Geometry

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Ninety (90) semester credits shall be the minimum required in professional education.

1. Basic Health Science

Content Area is required in each topic listed (a through e) under basic health sciences.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| a. Human anatomy (specific to physical therapy) | c. Neuroscience |
| b. Human physiology (specific to physical therapy) | d. Kinesiology or functional anatomy |
| | e. Pathology |

2. Medical and Clinical Science

To prepare a competent physical therapist practitioner, the education must incorporate the essential elements of Examination, Evaluation, and Intervention. Therefore, educational coursework must contain all of the following:

- a. Clinical medicine pertinent to physical therapy. This must include but not be limited to:

1. Neurology	4. Geriatrics
2. Orthopedics	5. Cardiopulmonary
3. Pediatrics	6. Pharmacology

- b. Physical therapist coursework must include but not be limited to:

1. Integumentary System	3. Neuromuscular System
a. Examination	a. Examination
b. Evaluation	b. Evaluation
2. Musculoskeletal System	4. Cardiopulmonary System
a. Examination	a. Examination
b. Evaluation	b. Evaluation

Note: Examination and evaluation content areas must be completed. See Examination and Evaluation Content Area Summary on pages 9-10.

- c. Physical therapist coursework must include but is not limited to:

1. Integumentary Interventions	3. Neuromuscular Interventions
2. Musculoskeletal Interventions	4. Cardiopulmonary Interventions

Note: Intervention content areas must be completed. See Intervention Content Area Summary on page 11.

3. Clinical Education

Clinical education must include physical therapist-supervised application of physical therapy theory, examination, evaluation, and intervention. The applicant must have a minimum of two (2) full time clinical internships of no less than 800 hours total, which are supervised by a physical therapist. The maximum number of full-time clinical education credits is twenty-three (23).

4. Related Professional Coursework

Content is required in the following nine areas:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. Professional behaviors | f. Medical terminology |
| b. Administration | g. Communication (related to client/patient care) |
| c. Community health | h. Legal and ethical aspects of physical therapy practice |
| d. Research and clinical decision making | i. Psychosocial aspects in PT practice |
| e. Educational techniques | |

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Name:	Date:
School:	Country:
Degree:	
Reviewing Organization:	
Reviewer(s):	
Signature of Issuing Organization's Authorized Representative:	
Print Name and Title:	

Note for Reviewing Organizations: Please affix official organization seal to each page of the Evaluation Checklist for authentication purposes.

I. General Education

A minimum of Sixty (60) semester credits is required in this area.

A. HUMANITIES: One Course Minimum	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. English (see note)		
2. English Composition (see note)		
3. Speech or Oral Communication		
4. Foreign Language (other than native language)		
5. Literature		
6. Art		
7. Music		
8. Native Language		
9.		

Note: If no credit in English or English composition is provided (1. and 2.), the licensing jurisdiction should require the applicant to demonstrate English proficiency.

**Coursework Evaluation Tool for
Foreign Educated Physical Therapists**

B. PHYSICAL SCIENCE: Two one semester courses in chemistry with laboratory and two one semester courses in physics with laboratory are required*	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Chemistry with laboratory (Course I)*		
2. Chemistry, with laboratory (Course II)*		
3. Physics with laboratory (Course I)*		
4. Physics with laboratory (Course II)*		
5. Geology		
6. Astronomy		
7.		
8.		

*Required

C. BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE: One Course Minimum	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Biology		
2. Anatomy		
3. Physiology		
4. Zoology		
5. Kinesiology		
6. Neuroscience		
7. Genetics		
8.		
9.		

**Coursework Evaluation Tool for
Foreign Educated Physical Therapists**

D. SOCIAL SCIENCE: One Course Minimum	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. History		
2. Geography		
3. Sociology		
4. Economics		
5. Religion		
6. Political Science		
7.		
8.		

E. BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE: One Course Minimum	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Psychology*		
2. Anthropology		
3. Philosophy		
4. Ethics		
5.		
6.		

*Required

F. MATHEMATICS: One Course Minimum	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Statistics		
2. Algebra		
3. Pre-Calculus		
4. Calculus		
5. Trigonometry		
6. Geometry		
7.		
8.		

**SUB-TOTAL GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS: _____
(60 minimum)**

II. Professional Education

A minimum of ninety (90) semester credits is required in this area.

A. BASIC HEALTH SCIENCE: Content Areas Required in Each (1 – 5.)	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Human Anatomy (Specific to physical therapy)			
2. Human Physiology (Specific to physical therapy)			
3. Neuroscience (Neuroanatomy/ Neurophysiology)			
4. Kinesiology or Functional Anatomy			
5. Pathology			
6.			
7.			

B. MEDICAL SCIENCE: Clinical medicine pertinent to physical therapy. This must include but is not limited to 1 - 6.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Neurology			
2. Orthopedics			
3. Pediatrics			
4. Geriatrics			
5. Cardiopulmonary			
6. Pharmacology			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

**Coursework Evaluation Tool for
Foreign Educated Physical Therapists**

C. CLINICAL SCIENCE: EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION Physical Therapist coursework must include but is not limited to 1a – 4b.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Integumentary System			
a. Examination			
b. Evaluation			
2. Musculoskeletal System			
a. Examination			
b. Evaluation			
3. Neuromuscular System			
a. Examination			
b. Evaluation			
4. Cardiopulmonary System			
a. Examination			
b. Evaluation			
5.			
6.			
7.			

Note: Within the credit hours assigned above, indicate on the examination and evaluation content area summary below, content for which you found evidence for items 1. - 23.

Examination and Evaluation Content Area Summary

Examination and Evaluation content areas include, but are not limited to the following:	Present = √ Absent = Ø	Transcript Reference
1. Aerobic capacity		
2. Anthropometric characteristics		
3. Arousal, mentation, and cognition		
4. Assistive and adaptive devices		
5. Community and work (job, school, or play) reintegration		
6. Cranial nerve integrity		
7. Environmental, home, and work barriers		
8. Ergonomics and body mechanics		
9. Gait, assisted locomotion, and balance		
10. Integumentary integrity		

**Coursework Evaluation Tool for
Foreign Educated Physical Therapists**

Examination and Evaluation content areas include, but are not limited to the following:	Present = √ Absent = Ø	Transcript Reference
11. Joint integrity and mobility		
12. Motor function		
13. Muscle performance (including strength, power, and endurance)		
14. Neuromotor development and sensory integration		
15. Orthotic, protective and supportive devices		
16. Pain		
17. Posture		
18. Prosthetic requirements		
19. Range of motion		
20. Reflex integrity		
21. Self-care and home management (including activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living)		
22. Sensory integration (including proprioception and kinesthesia)		
23. Ventilation, respiration, and circulation		
24.		
25.		

Adapted from: *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists*. Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education; 1996; p. 29.

D. CLINICAL SCIENCE: INTERVENTIONS Physical Therapist coursework must include but is not limited to 1 – 4.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Integumentary Interventions			
2. Musculoskeletal Interventions			
3. Neuromuscular Interventions			
4. Cardiopulmonary Interventions			
5.			
6.			

Note: Within the credit hours assigned above, indicate on the intervention content area summary below, content for which you found evidence for items 1-10.

Intervention Content Area Summary

Intervention content areas (listed alphabetically) include, but are not limited to, the following:	Present = √ Absent = Ø	Transcript Reference
1. Airway clearance techniques		
2. Debridement and wound care		
3. Electrotherapeutic modalities		
4. Functional training in community and work (job, school, or play) reintegration (including instrumental activities of daily living, work hardening, and work conditioning)		
5. Functional training in self-care and home management (including activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living)		
6. Manual therapy techniques		
7. Patient-related instruction		
8. Physical agents and mechanical modalities		
9. Prescription, application, and as appropriate, fabrication of assistive, adaptive, orthotic, protective, supportive, and prosthetic devices and equipment		
10. Therapeutic exercise (including aerobic conditioning)		
11.		
12.		

Adapted from: *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists*. Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education; 1996; p. 30.

E. CLINICAL EDUCATION	CREDIT HOURS**	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
Two Clinical Internships, total 800 hours			

Note: Clinical education must include physical therapist-supervised application of physical therapy theory, examination, evaluation, and intervention. The applicant must have a minimum of two (2) full-time clinical internships of no less than 800 hours total that are supervised by a physical therapist.

* **Maximum number of full time clinical education credits is 23.

**Coursework Evaluation Tool for
Foreign Educated Physical Therapists**

F. RELATED PROFESSIONAL COURSEWORK: Course content required 1 – 9.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Professional Behaviors			
2. Administration			
3. Community Health			
4. Research and Clinical Decision Making			
5. Educational Techniques			
6. Medical Terminology			
7. Communication (related to client/patient care)			
8. Legal and Ethical Aspects of Physical Therapy practice			
9. Psychosocial Aspects in Physical Therapy Practice			
10.			
11.			
12.			

SUB-TOTAL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION CREDITS: _____
(90 minimum)

III. ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

A. Describe the academic level of the educational program and the institution within the context of the country's educational system:
1. Status (recognition/accreditation) within the country's educational system:
2. Entry requirements (secondary education):
3. Degree equivalence (Baccalaureate, etc.):
4. Other (CAPTE accreditation, etc.):

IV. Summary

Total General Education Credits (60 Minimum):	
Total Professional Education Credits (90 Minimum):	
Total Credits (150 Minimum)	

DEFINITIONS

Adequate: Coursework satisfies the requirement that the level of complexity and scope of the content in a course or courses meets established standards necessary for the entry-level degree.

Clinical Education: That portion of a physical therapy program that is conducted in the healthcare environment rather than the academic environment. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2000: p. 112.*) That aspect of the curriculum is where students' learning occurs directly as a function of being immersed within physical therapy practice. These experiences comprise all of the formal and practical "real-life" learning experiences provided for students to apply classroom knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors in the clinical environment. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 97: p. 201.*)

Clinical Sciences: The curricular content which addresses the systems approach to medical and surgical conditions frequently encountered by physical therapists. This component of the curriculum includes content about the cardiopulmonary, integumentary, musculoskeletal, and neuromuscular systems. Clinical science content is related to practice expectations which include the specific responsibilities of patient screening, examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, plan of care, intervention, and outcomes assessment and evaluation. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 97; p. 47.*) Content includes both diseases that require direct intervention of a physical therapist for management and diseases that affect conditions being managed by physical therapists across systems. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2000; p. 112.*)

Clock Hour: Fifty to sixty minutes or as determined by the policy of the institution.

Content Area: Component competencies as designated by the *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists* (Adopted October 1996; Effective January 1998).

Credit Hour: A semester credit hour must include at a minimum: 15 hours of lecture, or 30 hours of laboratory, or 48 hours of clinical education.

Evaluation: A dynamic process in which the physical therapist makes clinical judgments gathered during the examination (*Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition, January 2001: p. S35*).

Examination: The process of obtaining a history, performing relevant systems reviews, and selecting and administering specific tests and measurements to obtain data for determining a diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention. (*Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition, January 2001:p. S35*).

Foundational (Basic) Sciences: Essential content that contributes to the development and understanding of physical therapy to include sciences that can be described as *basic* and *applied* and as *biological, physical, and behavioral*. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2000, p. 114*) Include anatomy, histology, physiology, applied physiology, pathophysiology, behavioral sciences, biomechanics and kinesiology, neuroscience, pathology, and pharmacology. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 97, p. 14*)

General Education: General Education constitutes all non-physical therapy education completed, provided these courses were taken at the college level from a recognized educational program. These courses, both pre-professional and post-professional education, may be used to fulfill the 60 credit requirements after the core courses have been met.

Intervention: The purposeful and skilled interaction of the physical therapist with the patient/client, and, when appropriate, with other individuals involved in care, using various methods and techniques to produce changes in the patient's/client's condition consistent with the diagnosis and prognosis. (*Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition, Jan. 2001; p. S37*); (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2000; Page 7*)

Justification: Validation of transcript reference. Identifies within official institutional records specific reference to where content area(s) may be found. These references may be in the form of educational objectives, listing of course content, course syllabi, test questions, or other curricular documents.

Standards: Foundational requirements of an established profession; in this case used by FCCPT to determine entry-level professional requirements for physical therapists. In physical therapy, *The Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition, A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2000*, and *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists* serve as resources for setting these requirements.

Substantially Equivalent: The individual has satisfied or exceeded the minimum number of credits required in general and professional education needed for a U.S. first professional degree in physical therapy. Coursework completed may not be identical in all respects to a U.S. first professional degree in physical therapy, but all required content areas are evident. Deficiencies may be noted in coursework, but not in essential areas of professional education nor of such magnitude that the education is not deemed to be at the entry-level of preparation for practice in the United States.

Transcript Reference: Official documentation from the academic institution of courses completed, grades assigned, and degree conferred in the form of an official transcript. In the exceptional cases where an official transcript does not exist within the institution, an alternative

official document may be considered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 97, American Physical Therapy Association; 1997.

A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2000, American Physical Therapy Association; 2000.

Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists, Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education; Adopted October 30, 1996; Effective January 1, 1998.

Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition, American Physical Therapy Association, January 2001.

NPTE Analysis of Practice, Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, 2002.

Prescreening Evaluation Tool, Foreign Credentialing Commission on Physical Therapy; Third Edition, March 1999.

The Coursework Evaluation Tool Validation Study, Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3, Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy and Northwestern University, Hayes and Sanders: 2002-2003.

Appendix A BACKGROUND

The first Tool was published in June 1996 and encompassed both general and professional minimal U.S. education requirements. This first Tool was the result of a collaborative effort of many individuals associated with the FSBPT. Documents from the CAPTE were reviewed and informal discussions with staff members from the CAPTE occurred regarding such topics as credits and courses. Documents from the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) were reviewed, in addition to catalogs of institutions offering physical therapist educational programs and guidelines from 49 jurisdictions for licensing foreign educated physical therapists. Research done by the New Jersey State Board of Physical Therapy Education Committee, surveys compiled by the Foreign Educated Physical Therapist Committee of the FSBPT, and an analysis of requirements of 55 licensing jurisdictions completed by International Credentialing Associates were also considered during the establishment of the Tool.

The Second Edition was published in June 1997 and reflected descriptive and editorial improvements.

The Third Edition, published in March 1999, reflected changes in content and credit hour requirements. This edition was developed after consulting the following sources: *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 97*, American Physical Therapy Association, 1997; *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists*, Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, 1990; and additional information compiled by the FSBPT Foreign Educated Physical Therapist Committee, 1998-1999.

This Fourth Edition has been modified to include terminology and concepts published in professional reference documents that describe contemporary education and practice in the U.S. This edition was developed using the following additional sources: *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition*, American Physical Therapy Association, January 2001; *Prescreening Evaluation Tool*, Foreign Credentialing Commission on Physical Therapy, Third Edition, March 1999; and *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists*, Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, adopted October 30, 1996; effective January 1, 1998.

USCIS requires that agencies that provide visa screening for healthcare workers engage in ongoing validation studies of the tools used to assess candidates for USCIS certifications. The final modifications in terminology in the Fourth Edition resulted from recommendations from the *Validation Study* conducted at Northwestern University to bring it into compliance with the current CAPTE Evaluative Criteria, cited above.

According to Phase 1 of the Validation Study, the Fourth Edition and 1999 versions of the Tool are within 94.7% compliance for content validity. The Fourth Edition and the CAPTE Evaluative

Coursework Evaluation Tool for Foreign Educated Physical Therapists

Criteria show 75% compliance before the changes in terminology and 80% with the current changes in the area of Related Professional Coursework. The remaining items which are not matched are reflective of performance items, thus not demonstrated in a paper and pencil Tool. This finding supports the recommendation for implementation of clinical performance assessments in conjunction with the Tool.

Phase 2 of the Validation Study demonstrated a higher inter and intra-rater reliability in the Fourth Edition. Reviewers reported a greater confidence in their final recommendations with the Fourth edition of the Tool. Phase 3 of the Validation Study looked at the sensitivity of the Tool to ensure that it did not evaluate PTAs as equivalent. The Tool performed well in this area, showing an appropriate level of sensitivity. FSBPT intends to continue with future studies as appropriate.

CAPTE has begun a review of the *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists* to be completed within the next two years. This Tool will be updated to reflect any content changes for use when and if any new *Evaluative Criteria* are released.