

Physiotherapy Competency Examination Blueprint 2018

Background

In 2017, the National Physiotherapy Advisory Group (NPAG) completed their most recent competency profile for the physiotherapy profession in Canada. This major initiative was led by the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators (CAPR) and the Canadian Council of Physiotherapy University Programs (CCPUP) with significant contributions from Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC) and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA). The work was directed by a Steering Group, supported by physiotherapist subject matter experts, and informed and validated by over 1,000 registered physiotherapists from across Canada who participated in a practice survey (for an overview of this survey, including the demographics and analysis process, please see [Appendix 1](#)). This collaborative work culminated in the publishing of the '[Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada \(2017\)](#)' ('Competency Profile').

What's New?

The 3rd generation competency profile, completed in 2009, was ground-breaking at the time because it was based on roles that were adapted from the well-researched CanMEDS framework. This 4th competency profile builds on this. The 7 roles of a physiotherapist have been updated into 7 competencies and then taken a step further identifying, for the first time, entry-to-practice milestones.

What are entry-to-practice milestones?

An entry-to-practice milestone is an ability, relating to an essential competency, that is expected of a physiotherapist following the completion of education and at the point of initial licensure. These entry-to-practice milestones are intended to provide guidance to inform physiotherapy curriculum content, set accreditation standards and establish a baseline for areas of specialization. Of importance to CAPR is their value in creating an updated Physiotherapy Competency Examination (PCE) blueprint, which was completed and approved by CAPR's Board of Directors in 2018. This new blueprint will be used to create exam forms from May 2020 (Written Component) and June 2020 (Clinical Component) onwards.

The Examination Blueprint

The Examination Blueprint outlines the essential elements to be covered by the PCE and specifies what proportion of an examination will cover each of them. These elements are organized under two dimensions: Domains and Areas of Practice. The Examination Blueprint in turn directs the construction of a bank of questions and clinical stations for the PCE. Other Guidelines (Table 2) are also considered in exam question development as well as selection of questions for each examination. The questions for each exam are a representative sample of the Domains found in Table 3 (contained in the 'Competency Profile') and the Areas of Practice found in Table 4.

The overall process ensures that an examination drawn from the question bank does, in fact, evaluate the knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to physiotherapy practice. To further ensure that the PCE aligns with physiotherapy at entry-to-practice, CAPR participated in the Canadian Council of Physiotherapy University Programs' revisions of its National Curriculum Guidelines. These Guidelines were aligned with the 'Competency Profile' under three major areas: Foundational Knowledge, Entry-to-Practice Minimal Skills, and Common Conditions in Physiotherapy. CCPUP anticipates that the documents associated with these areas will be finalized in fall 2019. Once available, they will be linked to this document as supplementary resources for candidates.

The Examination Blueprint is reviewed and revised following each Analysis of Practice. Changes to the Examination Blueprint for 2020 included adjusting the proportions of the examination and realigning the questions and clinical stations to the Domains, Competencies, and Entry-to-Practice Milestones contained in the 'Competency Profile'.

Table 4 contains a sample list of conditions evaluated by the PCE. The information in this table is presented in broad categories; candidates should use this list in conjunction with the CCPUP documents available above. In all instances, candidates should consider conditions (a) at any point along the continuum of care (i.e. out-patient/clinic, inpatient, rehabilitation, long-term care), (b) for all stages of healing (i.e. prevention, acute, sub-acute, chronic), (c) for all types of management (i.e. conservative, surgical), and (d) throughout the lifespan of a client (i.e. pediatrics to geriatrics). *See Table 2 for more information.*

The following tables are related to the Examination Blueprint document:

- Table 1: Examination Blueprint
- Table 2: Additional Guidelines for the PCE
- Table 3: Domains, Competencies, and Entry-to-Practice Milestones evaluated by the PCE
- Table 4: Areas of Practice evaluated by the PCE

TABLE 1: EXAMINATION BLUEPRINT

Domain	Physiotherapy Expertise	55 ± 5%
	Communication	10 ± 5%
	Collaboration	10 ± 5%
	Management	5 ± 2%
	Leadership	5 ± 2%
	Scholarship	5 ± 2%
	Professionalism	10 ± 5%
Areas of Practice	Musculoskeletal	50 ± 5%
	Neurological	20 ± 5%
	Cardiovascular-respiratory	15 ± 5%
	Other	15 ± 5%

TABLE 2: ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PCE

This list is not necessarily exhaustive

<p style="text-align: center;">Continuum of Care</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Preventive / 2. Maintenance / 3. Restorative: acute/subacute/chronic</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Client Groups</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. 0-18 years / 2. 19-49 years / 3. 50-65 years / 4. Over 65 years</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Client Gender</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Female / 2. Male</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Practice Settings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Acute Care Facility / 2. Private Practice / 3. Rehabilitation Centre / 4. Community Care / 5. Extended Care Facility</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Associated Considerations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Language/communication difficulties / 2. Differences in cultural background / 3. Functional disabilities / 4. Demanding work factors / 5. Socio-economic factors / 6. Social factors</p>

TABLE 3: DOMAINS, COMPETENCIES, AND ENTRY-TO-PRACTICE MILESTONES EVALUATED BY THE PCE

To review the descriptions and definitions relevant to this section, please view '[Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada \(2017\)](#)'

DOMAIN 1: PHYSIOTHERAPY EXPERTISE (55 ± 5%)
Essential Competency 1.1: Employ a client-centered approach.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1 Act in a manner that respects client uniqueness, diversity and autonomy, and is in the client’s best interest. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.1.2 Provide the client with relevant information throughout care. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.1.3 Actively involve the client in decision-making. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.1.4 Empower client to engage in their own care. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.1.5 Build and maintain rapport and trust with the client. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.1.6 Ensure ongoing, informed client consent.
Essential Competency 1.2: Ensure physical and emotional safety of client.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.2.1 Identify client-specific precautions, contraindications and risks. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.2.2 Employ safe client handling techniques. 1.2.3 Apply assessment and intervention procedures in a manner that enhances the client’s safety and comfort. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.2.4 Monitor and respond to client’s physical and emotional state throughout care. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.2.5 Identify and respond to near misses and adverse events.
Essential Competency 1.3: Conduct client assessment.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3.1 Interview client to obtain relevant information about health conditions, and personal and environmental factors. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.3.2 Determine client’s expectations, and their relevance to physiotherapy. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.3.3 Obtain relevant information about client’s status from other sources. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.3.4 Identify comorbidities that impact approach to assessment. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.3.5 Identify urgent health conditions that require immediate attention and take appropriate action. 1.3.6 Identify non-urgent health-related conditions that may benefit from referral to other services, and advise client accordingly. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.3.7 Select and perform appropriate tests and measures.
Essential Competency 1.4: Establish a diagnosis and prognosis.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">1.4.1 Interpret assessment findings and other relevant information. 1.4.2 Identify client’s body structure and function impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.4.3 Develop a physiotherapy diagnosis. <li style="padding-left: 60px;">1.4.4 Develop a working prognosis. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">1.4.5 Determine if physiotherapy is indicated.

1.4.6 Determine if referral to another physiotherapist or another provider is indicated.

Essential Competency 1.5: Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate an intervention plan.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 1.5.1 Establish physiotherapy goals.
- 1.5.2 Determine an intervention plan.
- 1.5.3 Implement planned interventions.
- 1.5.4 Assist client to develop self-management skills.
- 1.5.5 Monitor and respond to client status during interventions.
- 1.5.6 Reassess client status and needs as appropriate.
- 1.5.7 Modify intervention plan as indicated.

Essential Competency 1.6: Complete or transition care.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 1.6.1 Evaluate client outcomes and goal attainment.
- 1.6.2 Develop a discharge or transition of care plan.
- 1.6.3 Prepare client for discharge or transition of care.
- 1.6.4 Ensure effective transfer of information at transition.

Essential Competency 1.7: Plan, deliver and evaluate programs.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 1.7.1 Identify opportunities for group physiotherapy programming.
- 1.7.2 Establish program goals and develop a plan.
- 1.7.3 Implement program plan.
- 1.7.4 Evaluate program.

DOMAIN 2: COMMUNICATION (10 ± 5%)

Essential Competency 2.1: Use oral and non-verbal communication effectively.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 2.1.1 Speak clearly and concisely.
- 2.1.2 Listen actively, to build trust and foster exchange of information.
- 2.1.3 Use and respond to body language appropriately.
- 2.1.4 Give and receive feedback in a constructive manner.

Essential Competency 2.2: Use written communication effectively.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 2.2.1 Write in a clear, concise and organized fashion.
- 2.2.2 Ensure written communication is legible.
- 2.2.3 Prepare comprehensive and accurate health records and other documents, appropriate to purpose.

Essential Competency 2.3: Adapt communication approach to context.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 2.3.1 Adjust communication strategy consistent with purpose and setting.
- 2.3.2 Use appropriate terminology.

<p>2.3.3 Adjust communication based on level of understanding of recipient.</p> <p>2.3.4 Ensure communication is timely.</p> <p>2.3.5 Share information empathetically and respectfully.</p>
<p>Essential Competency 2.4: Use communication tools and technologies effectively.</p>
<p><i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i></p> <p>2.4.1 Employ assistive and augmentative devices to enhance communication.</p> <p>2.4.2 Use electronic technologies appropriately and responsibly.</p> <p>2.4.3 Use images, videos and other media to enhance communication.</p>
<p>DOMAIN 3: COLLABORATION (10 ± 5%)</p>
<p>Essential Competency 3.1: Promote an integrated approach to client services.</p>
<p><i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i></p> <p>3.1.1 Identify practice situations that may benefit from collaborative care.</p> <p>3.1.2 Engage client as a team member.</p>
<p>Essential Competency 3.2: Facilitate collaborative relationships.</p>
<p><i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i></p> <p>3.2.1 Recognize and respect the roles of others.</p> <p>3.2.2 Share information about the physiotherapist’s role and knowledge.</p> <p>3.2.3 Negotiate shared and overlapping roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>3.2.4 Maintain mutually supportive working relationships.</p> <p>3.2.5 Interact with others in a manner that promotes inclusion.</p>
<p>Essential Competency 3.3: Contribute to effective teamwork.</p>
<p><i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i></p> <p>3.3.1 Respect accepted principles for teamwork.</p> <p>3.3.2 Participate in shared leadership.</p> <p>3.3.3 Share relevant information with the team.</p> <p>3.3.4 Participate and be respectful of all members’ participation in collaborative decision-making.</p> <p>3.3.5 Participate in team evaluation and improvement initiatives.</p>
<p>Essential Competency 3.4: Contribute to conflict resolution.</p>
<p><i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i></p> <p>3.4.1 Recognize conflict or potential conflict, and respond constructively.</p> <p>3.4.2 Apply conflict resolution principles in a structured fashion.</p>
<p>DOMAIN 4: MANAGEMENT (5 ± 2%)</p>
<p>Essential Competency 4.1: Support organizational excellence.</p>
<p><i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i></p> <p>4.1.1 Support organizational mission and vision.</p> <p>4.1.2 Comply with organizational policies, procedures and directives.</p> <p>4.1.3 Address discrepancies between employer expectations and professional standards.</p> <p>4.1.4 Follow proper business practices.</p>

Essential Competency 4.2: Utilize resources efficiently and effectively.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<p>4.2.1 Provide services that balance client needs and available resources.</p> <p>4.2.2 Address issues related to waitlists, caseloads and access to services.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.2.3 Manage own time effectively.</p> <p>4.2.4 Address issues related to availability of equipment and supplies.</p>
Essential Competency 4.3: Ensure a safe practice environment.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<p>4.3.1 Identify risks and mitigate hazards in the workplace.</p> <p>4.3.2 Maintain a clean, organized and accessible work environment.</p> <p>4.3.3 Adhere to individual, team and system-level safety practices.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4.3.4 Apply best practices for infection control.</p> <p>4.3.5 Adapt work environment to enhance emotional safety.</p> <p>4.3.6 Ensure regular equipment cleaning and maintenance.</p>
Essential Competency 4.4: Engage in quality improvement activities.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<p>4.4.1 Apply quality improvement strategies in direct service provision.</p> <p>4.4.2 Participate in organizational quality improvement initiatives.</p> <p>4.4.3 Use outcome data to evaluate service delivery.</p>
Essential Competency 4.5: Supervise others.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<p>4.5.1 Assess the competence of personnel involved in physiotherapy service delivery prior to assigning care.</p> <p>4.5.2 Assign care to personnel involved in physiotherapy service delivery, and monitor delivery.</p> <p>4.5.3 Contribute to orientation and training of personnel involved in physiotherapy service delivery.</p> <p>4.5.4 Provide guidance and feedback to personnel involved in physiotherapy service delivery.</p>
Essential Competency 4.6: Manage practice information safely and effectively.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<p>4.6.1 Maintain comprehensive, accurate and timely records of client and practice management.</p> <p>4.6.2 Manage health records and other information in paper and electronic format.</p> <p>4.6.3 Ensure secure retention, storage, transfer and destruction of documents.</p> <p>4.6.4 Maintain confidentiality of records and data, with appropriate access.</p>
DOMAIN 5: LEADERSHIP (5 ± 2%)
Essential Competency 5.1: Champion the health needs of clients.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
<p>5.1.1 Advocate for accessibility and sustainability of physiotherapy and other services across the continuum of care.</p> <p>5.1.2 Foster client engagement in finding solutions to address health needs.</p> <p>5.1.3 Promote a culture of client-centredness.</p>
Essential Competency 5.2: Promote innovation in healthcare.

<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
5.2.1 Maintain awareness of emerging technologies, and advocate for their application to enhance physiotherapy services.
5.2.2 Advocate for new approaches to improve client care.
5.2.3 Promote solutions to challenges encountered in physiotherapy practice.
Essential Competency 5.3: Contribute to leadership in the profession.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
5.3.1 Promote the value of physiotherapy to client health.
5.3.2 Engage in activities to support advancement of the physiotherapy profession.
5.3.3 Contribute to leadership activities in the workplace.
DOMAIN 6: SCHOLARSHIP (5 ± 2%)
Essential Competency 6.1: Use an evidence-informed approach in practice.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
6.1.1 Incorporate best available evidence into clinical decision-making.
6.1.2 Incorporate client context into clinical decision-making.
6.1.3 Incorporate personal knowledge and experience into clinical decision-making.
6.1.4 Make decisions using an established clinical reasoning framework.
6.1.5 Use a structured approach to evaluate effectiveness of decisions.
Essential Competency 6.2: Engage in scholarly inquiry.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
6.2.1 Identify ethical considerations related to scholarly inquiry.
6.2.2 Formulate researchable questions relevant to practice.
6.2.3 Access reliable sources of information.
6.2.4 Critically appraise information.
6.2.5 Contribute to research activities.
6.2.6 Contribute to knowledge management.
Essential Competency 6.3: Integrate self-reflection and external feedback to improve personal practice.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
6.3.1 Seek feedback from others on personal performance and behaviour.
6.3.2 Compare personal performance and behaviour with professional and organizational expectations.
6.3.3 Identify learning needs based on self-reflection and external feedback.
6.3.4 Develop and implement a plan to address learning needs.
Essential Competency 6.4: Maintain currency with developments relevant to area of practice.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
6.4.1 Access emerging information relevant to area of practice.
6.4.2 Determine potential for applicability of emerging information to personal practice.
Essential Competency 6.5: Contribute to the learning of others.
<i>Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones</i>
6.5.1 Identify the physiotherapy-related learning needs of others.

- 6.5.2 Contribute to the education of peers and other healthcare providers.
- 6.5.3 Contribute to the clinical education of students.
- 6.5.4 Assess effectiveness of learning activities.

DOMAIN 7: PROFESSIONALISM (10 ± 5%)

Essential Competency 7.1: Comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 7.1.1 Comply with applicable federal and provincial / territorial legislation.
- 7.1.2 Comply with regulatory requirements.
- 7.1.3 Maintain confidentiality and privacy as appropriate.

Essential Competency 7.2: Behave ethically.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 7.2.1 Use an ethical framework to guide decision-making.
- 7.2.2 Address real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- 7.2.3 Promote services in an ethical manner.

Essential Competency 7.3: Embrace social responsibility as a health professional.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 7.3.1 Maintain awareness of issues and advances affecting the health system locally, nationally and globally.
- 7.3.2 Demonstrate awareness of the social determinants of health and emerging trends that may impact physiotherapy practice.

Essential Competency 7.4: Act with professional integrity.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 7.4.1 Behave with honesty and respect for others.
- 7.4.2 Behave in a manner that values diversity.
- 7.4.3 Work within physiotherapy scope of practice and personal level of competence.
- 7.4.4 Accept accountability for decisions and actions.
- 7.4.5 Maintain professional deportment.
- 7.4.6 Maintain professional boundaries.
- 7.4.7 Respond constructively to changes affecting the workplace.

Essential Competency 7.5: Maintain personal wellness consistent with the needs of practice.

Associated Entry-to-Practice Milestones

- 7.5.1 Balance personal and professional demands.
- 7.5.2 Address physical, emotional and psychological factors negatively impacting workplace performance.

TABLE 4: AREAS OF PRACTICE EVALUATED BY THE PCE

Use in conjunction with the CCPUP documents outlined on page 1.

01.01. MUSCULOSKELETAL
01.01.01 Muscle contusions/strains/tears/weakness
01.01.02 Pelvic floor dysfunction
01.01.03 Ligament sprains/tears
01.01.04 Tendinopathy; tendon ruptures/tears
01.01.05 Fasciitis; fascial tearing; myofascial restriction
01.01.06 Joint derangements/dysfunction (e.g. haemarthrosis/effusion; hyper/hypomobility)
01.01.07 Fractures, dislocations, subluxations
01.01.08 Osteoporosis/osteopenia
01.01.09 Meniscal injuries
01.01.10 Degenerative joint disease/arthritis conditions
01.01.11 Mechanical spinal abnormalities (e.g. low back pain, scoliosis)
01.01.12 Inflammatory/infectious conditions of the musculoskeletal system (e.g.: osteomyelitis)
01.01.13 Amputations
01.01.14 Congenital malformations (e.g. talipes equinovarus; hip dysplasia)
01.01.15 Scars
01.01.16 Chronic pain/fibromyalgia
01.01.17 Rheumatic diseases
01.02. NEUROLOGICAL
01.02.01 Cerebral vascular accident/transient ischemic attack
01.02.02 Acquired brain injury
01.02.03 Spinal cord injury
01.02.04 Degenerative neurological/neuromuscular disorders (e.g. muscular dystrophies; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis)
01.02.05 Demyelinating disorders (e.g. multiple sclerosis)
01.02.06 Inflammatory/infectious conditions of nervous system (e.g. meningitis; Guillain-Barré syndrome)
01.02.07 Post-polio syndrome
01.02.08 Cerebellar disorders
01.02.09 Vestibular disorders
01.02.10 Neuropathies (e.g. peripheral neuropathies; complex regional pain syndrome)
01.02.11 Developmental/birth injuries (e.g. cerebral palsy; myelomeningocele)
01.02.12 Mental health disorders (e.g. dementia/delirium/depression; affective and cognitive disorders)
01.02.13 Altered level of consciousness (e.g. coma; seizures)
01.02.14 Neural tissue dysfunction/neuro-dynamic dysfunction

01.03. CARDIOVASCULAR -RESPIRATORY

01.03.01 Heart disease/malformation/injury (e.g. arteriosclerosis, blunt trauma)

01.03.02 Myocardial ischaemia and infarction

01.03.03 Heart failure, Cor pulmonale

01.03.04 Pneumonia (primary or post-operative/preventive)

01.03.05 Atelectasis (primary or post-operative/preventive)

01.03.06 Acute lung injury (e.g. adult/infant respiratory distress syndrome, pneumothorax)

01.03.07 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (e.g. emphysema, bronchiectasis)

01.03.08 Restrictive pulmonary disease (e.g. fibrosis, asthma)

01.03.09 Tuberculosis

01.03.10 Pleural effusion

01.03.11 Pulmonary edema

01.03.12 Cystic fibrosis

01.03.13 Disorders of the blood vessels (e.g. aneurysm, peripheral vascular disease, peripheral arterial disease)

01.03.14 Hematologic disorders

01.04. OTHER

01.04.01 Episodic disease (e.g. Haemophilia; autoimmune disease not mentioned elsewhere)

01.04.02 Oncology

01.04.03 Metabolic disorders/conditions (e.g. diabetes)

01.04.04 Lymphedema

01.04.05 Sepsis/infection

01.04.06 Obesity

01.04.07 Pregnancy and post-partum conditions

01.04.08 Integumentary disorders (e.g. burns; wounds; skin conditions)

01.04.09 Tumours

01.04.10 Complex conditions (multiple systems/diagnoses)

01.04.11 HIV/AIDS

01.04.12 Healthy populations (e.g. health promotion; education)

01.04.13 Gastrointestinal disorders