

This about us section is a public document. It provides brief background information related to physiotherapy in higher education and ENPHE's field of work.

SECTOR BACKGROUND

Physiotherapy in higher education refers to educational programmes in physiotherapy that are offered by higher education institutes.

Physiotherapy education is offered at both scientific universities, universities of applied sciences universities and equivalents. It is an education at European Qualification Framework outcome-based levels (EQF levels) 6 or 7 for the entry level, EQF level 7 for specializations and EQF level 8 for a research careers (PhD).

Being an autonomous profession, physiotherapy is a science and has its own body of knowledge and epistemology. The theoretical framework of physiotherapy programmes is based on two key concepts characterizing the physiotherapy profession; i.e. movement and functioning across the life span. The concept of movement is based on current theories in human movement science.

Associated to these concepts, are other scientific areas that the physiotherapists need to develop deeply in their body of knowledge and competences. These are considered as associated scientific areas: movement sciences, motor control, anatomy-physiology, pathology, psychology, social sciences, medicine and specialities, exercise, research, health management and policies, and educational sciences.

Physiotherapy education demands a learning process within this scientific body of knowledge and its associated areas, which requires a curricular structure with different scientific areas of a minimum of 3.5 to 5 years of education; combining theory, skills, and scientific critical thinking and clinical reasoning.

Physiotherapy education programmes are usually organized within health care, human movement sciences, or applied sciences education.

DEGREES

The situation of physiotherapy in higher education in Europe is relatively diverse. Most European countries offer physiotherapy education at higher education level whilst some provide programmes at lower educational levels. Most institutions offer entry-level study programmes of physiotherapy leading to BS degrees which is the first cycle in the education

system. Fewer universities in Europe offer entry-level study programmes of physiotherapy through MS degrees. The latter requires the students to finish both a 3 years' bachelor study programme and a 2 years' master study programme in order to become eligible for a professional license in physiotherapy. In addition, many universities offer doctoral studies in physiotherapy to further develop the profession.

POLICY POSITIONING

Because of the current and future epidemiological changes in society, higher education in physiotherapy and the training of highly skilled professionals is included in the European Commission's priorities and agenda to increase and better qualify the current health-care workforce (cf. Report "Recruitment and Retention of the Health Workforce" by the EU Consortium for the Study of Effective Health Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies in 2015).

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The main stakeholders of ENPHE are educational institutions and their respective lecturers and students. Given the fact that higher education aims to educate professionals for the practice, also professionals' organizations such as the European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (ER-WCPT) are relevant stakeholders for ENPHE. In addition, European policy stakeholders, such as the European Commission, and other networks related to higher education are relevant for ENPHE. Citizens of Europe are also stakeholder since they are the users of physiotherapy services.



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