

Meeting Practice Demands: Master's Level Programmes in Qualifying and Post-Qualifying Physiotherapy Education

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PURPOSE: Work was undertaken to review the expectations of Master's level programmes within post-qualifying education and to establish anew expectations of postgraduate level programmes within qualifying education. Both exercises took account of changing demands on, and opportunities for, practising physiotherapists in the UK **RELEVANCE:** The work related strongly to current and projected trends in physiotherapy education and practice, particularly in terms of the expansion of high-level roles that demand a genuine engagement with evidence-based practice and that extend the autonomy and influence of the profession in a context of health and social care founded on patient partnership **DESCRIPTION:** Activity drew on previous work undertaken at post-qualifying level, together with recent work to revise and update the Curriculum Framework for Qualifying Programmes in Physiotherapy and curricula prepared by individual higher education institutions. Documents produced outside the profession were also used, including those of the quality assurance agency for higher education in the UK, accreditation tariffs used by different UK countries and regions, and government policy documents on health and social care and the implications of change for health care professionals. Together, this material informed debate within the profession, particularly through the formal consideration of issues and expectations by professional body committees and working groups **RESULTS:** The work resulted in the production of new guidance for higher education institutions, education commissioners, the profession and related disciplines on professional expectations of Master's level education. This highlights the importance of physiotherapists developing the capacity to function at high levels, both clinically and more broadly, in ways that respond to patient need and organisational change. It also explains differences of expectation between postgraduate education within qualifying and post-qualifying education, while revolving around a set of core learning outcomes **CONCLUSIONS:** The work provided the opportunity to review the profession's expectations of higher education provision within a context of rapid change in the health and social care and university sectors. Work is now underway to produce guidance on the profession's expectations of professional doctorate programmes to seek to ensure these meet the professional development needs of specialists and consultants and physiotherapists working in other leadership roles