

# The Feasibility and Acceptability of the Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice Instrument During Pre-Registration Student Placements

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## Relevance

- All physiotherapy pre-registration programmes require that a significant proportion of the curriculum is conducted in clinical practice placements.
- A persistent difficulty in assessing students whilst on placement centres around the transparency and consistency of assessment, particularly when there are many practice educators involved over a wide range of geographically diverse placement settings.
- The Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice (APP) Instrument is a 20-item instrument covering seven domains; supported by performance indicators for each item to guide educators.
- It is a valid<sup>1</sup> and internally consistent<sup>2</sup> instrument for the assessment of entry-level competence in physiotherapy with high levels of inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability.


## Approach/Evaluation

- A series of consultation meetings were held over a calendar year with all relevant stakeholders, including professional body representatives, external examiners, practice educators, students, other university representatives and internal academic quality office personnel.
- Feedback from these consultations assisted in the design of future training workshops for practice educators in the use of the APP instrument.
- The APP instrument was piloted concurrently with the University's previous assessment form and feedback was sought from pilot sites.
- Qualitative data were collected from undergraduate and postgraduate pre-registration students and practice educators using structured feedback focus group sessions and interviews.





**Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice**  
Final Summative Placement Assessment



Student name:	Site/ Experience:	Date:

Scoring	A rating of 0 or 1 indicates that minimum acceptable competency has not been achieved
0	Infrequently/rarely demonstrates performance indicators
1	Demonstrates few performance indicators to an adequate standard
2	Demonstrates most performance indicators to an adequate standard
3	Demonstrates most performance indicators to a good standard
4	Demonstrates most performance indicators to an excellent standard
not	Item was not assessed

Professional Behaviour	Circle one number only					
1. Demonstrates an understanding of patient/client rights and consent	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
2. Demonstrates commitment to learning	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
3. Demonstrates ethical, legal & culturally sensitive practice	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
4. Demonstrates teamwork	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
Communication						
5. Communicates effectively and appropriately - Verbal/non-verbal	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
6. Demonstrates clear and accurate documentation	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
Risk Management						
7. Identifies adverse events/near misses and minimises risk associated with assessment and interventions	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
Assessment						
8. Conducts an appropriate patient/client interview	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
9. Selects and measures relevant health indicators and outcomes	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
10. Performs appropriate physical assessment procedures	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
Analysis & Planning						
11. Appropriately interprets assessment findings	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
12. Identifies and prioritises patient's/client's problems	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
13. Sets realistic short and long term goals with the patient/client	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
14. Selects appropriate intervention in collaboration with patient/client	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
Intervention						
15. Performs interventions appropriately	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
16. Is an effective educator	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
17. Monitors the effect of intervention	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
18. Progresses intervention appropriately	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
19. Undertakes discharge planning	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed
Evidence – Based Practice						
20. Applies evidence-based practice in patient care	0	1	2	3	4	not assessed

Global Rating Scale			
In your opinion as a practice educator, the overall performance of this student in the clinical unit was (please circle):			
Not adequate	Adequate	Good	Excellent

**Scoring rules:**

- Circle not assessed only if the student has not had an opportunity to demonstrate the behaviour
- If an item is not assessed it is not scored and the total APP score is adjusted for the missed learning outcome
- Circle only one number for each item
- If a score falls between numbers on the scale the higher number will be used to calculate a total
- Evaluate the student's performance against the minimum competency level expected for a beginning/entry level physiotherapist

## Purpose

- The aim of this project was to implement, pilot and evaluate the use of the Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice instrument across all pre-registration practice placements at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU).
- In particular, features such as transparency of marking, consistency and quality of feedback to students, feasibility and acceptability were evaluated.

## Outcome

- Feedback from pilot sites was very positive.
- Educators expressed that the behaviour focussed performance criteria of the APP considerably increased the ease and clarity of scoring students' performance, which also assisted practitioners in providing specific feedback to students.
- Students, in the main, were content with the use of the instrument, also appreciating the clear performance criteria.
- Uncertainty was voiced by both educators and students about the APP instrument grading all students to 'beginning/ entry level' standards of practice.

## Discussion & Conclusions

- An 18-month process of consultation and piloting the APP instrument allowed it to be adopted into practice in all pre-registration Physiotherapy programmes at the University.
- Feedback indicated that both practice educators and students felt that the instrument was acceptable and its clear performance criteria increased its feasibility for practice.
- Ongoing refinement of training workshops is required, particularly in relation to educating practitioners as to their expectations of 'beginning/ entry level' standards of practice.

## Impact and Implications

- The use of the APP instrument is recommended for Physiotherapy pre-registration programmes seeking a validated practice placement assessment method.
- Defining learning outcomes through behaviourally oriented performance criteria improves clarity of scoring for educators and enhances student feedback.

## Key References:

- Dalton M, Davidson M and Keating J 2011. The assessment of physiotherapy practice. (APP) is a valid measure of professional competence of physiotherapy students: a cross-sectional study with Rasch analysis. Australian Journal of Physiotherapy, Vol 57, pgs 239-246.
- Dalton M, Davidson M and Keating J 2012. The assessment of physiotherapy practice (APP) is a reliable measure of physiotherapy competence in physiotherapy students: a reliability study. Australian Journal of Physiotherapy, Vol 58, pgs 49-56.

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