

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH PROFESSIONS QUALITY ASSURANCE DIVISION
BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY
POLICY/PROCEDURE**

Title:	GRADUATES FROM UNAPPROVED PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAMS - Addendum	Number: 4.7
Reference:	RCW 18.130.095(3); RCW 34.05.482 through RCW 34.05.494; WAC 246-11-420 through WAC 246-11-450	
Contact:	Kris Waidely, Program Manager	
Effective Date:	August 19, 2008	
Approved:	Charles Martin, PT, DPT	
	Signature on file	
	Chair, State of Washington Board of Physical Therapy	

PURPOSE

The Board of Physical Therapy is charged with evaluating the qualifications of each applicant for a license to practice physical therapy in Washington. RCW 18.74.023. The minimum qualifications for licensure as a physical therapist are specified in RCW 18.74.030: an applicant must be of good moral character and must have earned either “a baccalaureate degree in physical therapy from an institution of higher learning approved by the board,” or “a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher learning and a certificate or advanced degree from a school of physical therapy approved by the board.” RCW 18.74.030(2). The Board has adopted the standards of the American Physical Therapy Association for the approval of physical therapy schools. WAC 246-915-100.

The Board receives applications from persons who have not received a degree or certificate from an approved physical therapy school. Some of these applicants are trained outside the United States in schools that may be of comparable quality to those of approved physical therapy schools, while other applicants have received training that would not satisfy the standards adopted by the Board. To avoid the unjust result that would occur from a blanket rejection of these applicants, the Board adopted a rule providing an opportunity for these applicants to become licensed, on an applicant-by-applicant determination. WAC 246-915-120. This applicant-by-applicant determination is an exception to the requirements in RCW 18.74.030, and the Board accordingly requires an applicant who has not received a degree or certificate from an approved physical therapy school to demonstrate he or she has training and achievement of a quantity and quality sufficient to “safeguard the public safety and welfare” and ensure “the highest degree of professional conduct and competency.” RCW 18.74.005.

This Policy sets forth the Board of Physical Therapy’s policy and procedure for evaluating applicants who are graduates of unapproved physical therapy schools. The

Board will refer to this Policy when assessing whether a particular applicant has graduated from an unapproved physical therapy school that nevertheless imposes on its graduates requirements “substantially equal to those required of graduates of board approved schools.” WAC 246-915-120. The Board also will refer to this Policy when assessing whether any particular deficiencies identified in an applicant’s training and education have been corrected.

POLICY

As authorized under RCW 18.74.023 and WAC 246-74-120, the Board of Physical Therapy will evaluate applicants for licensure who are not a graduates of board-approved physical therapy schools, on an applicant-by-applicant basis, to determine whether the applicant has provided documentation sufficient to demonstrate training and education substantially equal to that required of graduates of board approved physical therapy schools. The applicant must provide, at minimum, the documentation specified in WAC 246-74-120.

Where the Board has determined an applicant would be denied licensure solely because of a correctable deficiency in the training or education received at an unapproved physical therapy school, the Board may allow the applicant to remedy the deficiency in one of the ways specified in this Policy. When the applicant provides appropriate documentation to the Board demonstrating that each identified deficiency has been remedied, the Board will review the application for licensure. If the Board determines all requirements for licensure are satisfied at that time, the Board will proceed with the licensure process.

The Board will accept documentation showing successful completion of the following options for remedying identified deficiencies in training or education:

(1) Wound care. A broad-spectrum, hands-on course covering all aspects of wound care with a minimum class time of twelve hours. Correspondence coursework in wound care will not be accepted.

(2) Pharmacology. A pharmacology course that is specifically relevant to physical therapy practice with a minimum class time of six hours. The course must include basic information on the effects of medications on body functions.

(3) Geriatrics. A geriatrics course that specifically discusses the aging process with a minimum class time of 12 hours. Courses endorsed by the American Physical Therapy Association will be accepted. The Board may accept other courses of comparable quality.

(4) Cardiopulmonary care. A cardiopulmonary/cardiac care course endorsed by the American Physical Therapy Association with a minimum class time of twelve hours. The Board may accept other courses of comparable quality.