

Sports Physical Therapy Section

Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Physical Therapy Specialist Certification in Sports

1. General

Applicants must hold a current license to practice physical therapy in the United States or any of its possessions or territories.

Applicants will be required to pay application review and examination fees.

2. Emergency Care and CPR

- A. The applicant must be currently certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Level "B" by the American Heart Association **or** American Red Cross Community CPR certification **or** Professional Rescuer CPR certification.
- B. The applicant must submit evidence of current first aid certification. Acceptable training included the American Red Cross Emergency Response Course, certification as an Emergency Medical Technician, Paramedic, or certification by the National Athletic Trainers Association as a Certified Athletic Trainer. Applicants may submit equivalent advanced level emergency care training (ex. course syllabus and description) to the Specialty Council for review. The Council will determine if the training meets this eligibility requirement.

3. Direct Patient Care Experience

In addition to meeting the CPR and Emergency Care Requirements, applicants must meet requirements for Option A or Option B.

Option A

Applicants must submit evidence of 2,000 hours of direct patient care in the specialty area within the last ten (10) years. Twenty-five percent (25%) of these hours must have occurred within the last three years. Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/clinic management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)*. These elements, as defined in the *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice*, are examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention.

Option B

Applicants must submit evidence of successful completion of an APTA-credentialed post professional clinical residency that has a curriculum plan reflective of the Description of Specialty Practice: Sports Physical Therapy (DSP). Experience from residencies in which the curriculum plan reflects only a portion of the DSP will not be considered. Applicants who are currently enrolled in APTA-credentialed clinical residencies may apply for the specialist certification examination in the appropriate specialty area prior to completion of

the clinical residency. These applicants will be conditionally approved to sit for the examination, as long as they meet all other eligibility requirements, pending submission of evidence of successful completion of the APT credentialed clinical residency to APTA's Specialist Certification Department, no later than one month before the examination window opens. The deadline for submitting this evidence is January of the year the candidate is sitting for the examination. .

Direct patient care experience must include patient/client management of individuals with primary processes involving referral as the result of sports activity in **both** acute and rehabilitation settings.

4. Application

Applicants must describe their physical therapy practice experiences for **each** position and facility on the appropriate forms in the application. Applicants must also chart their experiences **by year** to ensure that they meet requirements. Applicants must document the number of **direct patient care** hours in the specialty.

The application booklet may be printed at no cost from APTA's Specialist Certification Department Website at

<http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Exams&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=203&ContentID=22444>

5. Examination

The applicant must also sit for and pass a written examination which tests the application of advanced knowledge and clinical skills identified in the book *Sports Physical Therapy: A Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)*. The *DSP* includes content related to rehabilitation, injury prevention and epidemiology, emergency care, evaluation, applied science and human performance, medical/surgical considerations, research, counseling and education, and administration. Refer to the exam content outline included in the application and the *DSP* book for detailed information on the exam content.