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The role of accreditation in the preparation of Canadian-educated physiotherapists for entry to practice

Key messages

- *Accreditation recognizes education programs that meet or exceed a pre-defined, agreed-upon standard of quality, and supports and encourages programs in their own quality improvement activities. Accreditation does not serve as confirmation of readiness to practice of every graduate.*
- *PEAC's role in entry-to-practice education accreditation is only one layer of many in the preparation of competent, safe, entry-to-practice graduates and the ongoing competence of physiotherapists in Canada.*
- *PEAC is committed to the partnerships we hold across the profession and with professional organizations. Moving forward, we look to continuing to leverage these partnerships to facilitate national conversations about the issues that face physiotherapists and physiotherapy.*

About PEAC

Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC) is a federally incorporated not-for-profit corporation responsible to accredit entry-to-practice physiotherapy education programs in Canada, and – jointly with the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists – to accredit occupational therapist assistant and physiotherapist assistant education programs in Canada.

PEAC's mission: Ensuring quality health professional education through accreditation.

About physiotherapy education accreditation

The accreditation of an entry-to-practice physiotherapy education program involves a number of steps that span approximately six months. The process begins with the submission of the program's Self Study Report four months before a site review and ends with an accreditation award decision made by PEAC's Accreditation Committee. Each program completes a full accreditation review at least every six years.

Accreditation DOES NOT

...assess the competence or the readiness-to-practice of every graduate in each graduating cohort. Programs with Accreditation status have demonstrated they

have what is necessary to promote student success, but accreditation does not guarantee the success of every graduate.

Accreditation DOES

...recognize education programs that meet or exceed a pre-defined, agreed-upon standard of quality. Accreditation supports and encourages programs in their own quality improvement activities. PEAC's accreditation process seeks to evaluate a program's effectiveness toward the fulfillment of its mission, the achievement of its goals, and its continuing efforts to enhance the quality of its program and of student learning and experience.

Links between accreditation and regulation

The link between professional education accreditation and regulation is an important one. Students from Canadian entry-to-practice physiotherapy education programs are eligible to register for the national Physiotherapy Competency Exam (PCE), administered by the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators (CAPR), if they graduate from an education program that has been awarded Accreditation status by PEAC.

PEAC does not have direct influence over CAPR, just as CAPR does not have direct influence over PEAC. Similarly, PEAC has no direct influence over individual regulatory colleges whose legislation is provincial. However, our longstanding partnership ensures respectful dialogue and collaboration towards the common goal of ensuring public safety and the preparation of entry-level graduates to deliver safe, competent physiotherapy services.

Other partnerships

The National Physiotherapy Advisory Group (NPAG) is a coalition of national physiotherapy related organizations – member organizations are PEAC, the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators (CAPR), the Canadian Council of Physiotherapy University Programs (CCPUP) and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA). The NPAG's mission is to collaborate and communicate regarding strategic matters affecting quality physiotherapy services in Canada. The members meet regularly throughout the year to share information and insights about current and evolving issues affecting the profession.

PEAC values its membership in NPAG and its other partnerships across the profession which facilitate national conversations about issues of importance to all of us, and not only in challenging times such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is through working together towards innovative solutions that these partnerships are strengthened.