



INFORMATION BROCHURE

North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners

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PURPOSE OF THE BOARD

The North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners was created in 1951 by the General Assembly to establish and maintain minimum standards for the practice of physical therapy to protect the safety and welfare of the citizens of North Carolina; to license physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to practice physical therapy in the State; to investigate complaints regarding unauthorized practice of physical therapy in the State and acts of licensees that violate the Practice Act and to issue interpretation of questions arising from the Physical Therapy Practice Act.

* This brochure is intended only as a Guide. The practice of physical therapy in North Carolina is governed by the Physical Therapy Practice Act and the Board's Rules, which take precedence over the statements in this brochure.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

The Governor appoints the eight-member Board to administer the North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act.

- Four members are licensed physical therapists,
- Two are licensed physical therapist assistants,
- One member represents the public sector,
- One member is a licensed medical doctor.

Members are appointed to serve three-year terms, or until their successors are appointed.

BOARD MEETINGS

Usually four - six meetings are held each year. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the chair.

BOARD OFFICE

The Board employs an Executive Director and office staff to manage the ongoing functions of the Board. In addition, the Board retains an Attorney to provide legal counsel and an Investigator for disciplinary actions. All Board correspondence should be sent to the Executive Director, N.C. Board of Physical Therapy Examiners, 18 West Colony Place, #140, Durham, NC 27705 (919/490-6393). FAX (919/490-5106). E-mail (ncptboard@mindspring.com). Web Page (www.ncptboard.org).

WEB PAGE (www.ncptboard.org)

The Board Office maintains a current web page. Included on the web page is the following information:

- General information about the Board
- Important Announcements from the Board
- North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act
- Rules
- Disciplinary Actions
- Position Statements
- List of the Board Members
- List of PT & PTA schools in NC

Licensees are encouraged to visit the web page on a monthly basis to review all new information.

LICENSURE

All persons must hold a current North Carolina license PRIOR to practicing in the State. **There is no temporary licensure in North Carolina.**

TYPES OF LICENSURE

Licenses are granted on the basis of either examination or endorsement of an active license in another state or territory if the individual's qualifications were at the time of licensure substantially equal to the requirements under the North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act.

REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE

All persons must be of good moral character; be graduated from an accredited physical therapy or physical therapist assistant educational program; have examination scores that meet the North Carolina passing level; and complete a NC Jurisprudence Exercise (www.ncptboard.org). In addition:

Therapists licensed in another state must hold a current license in the other state at the time the application for a North Carolina license is filed.

Internationally Educated (Foreign-Trained) Physical Therapists must meet the following requirements:

21 NCAC 48E .0110 FOREIGN-TRAINED PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

- (a) This rule applies to a physical therapist who has graduated from a program located outside the United States which has not been accredited in accordance with G.S. §90-270.29 [currently, the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)].
- (b) English Translations. All application forms and supporting documents must be in English or accompanied by an English translation.
- (c) If the applicant does not meet the requirements of G.S. §90-270.29(2), the Board shall examine the applicant's educational background to determine if the general and professional education is substantially equivalent to that obtained by an applicant for licensure under G.S. 90-270.29 as follows:
- (1) For candidates graduating prior to December 31, 2002, a minimum of 120 semester hours of college education at the freshman through senior level is required, which includes a minimum of 60 semester hours of professional curriculum, including basic health sciences, clinical sciences and clinical education, and a minimum of 42 semester hours of general education. Up to 21 hours may be substituted for actual course work by obtaining a passing score on College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations.
 - (2) For candidates graduating after December 31, 2002, the applicant's educational background must be substantially equivalent to a Post-Baccalaureate degree from a CAPTE approved physical therapy educational program. In order for a foreign-trained applicant's educational background to be determined substantially equivalent to a post-baccalaureate degree from a CAPTE approved program, the general and professional education must satisfy the requirements for the first professional degree as determined by the course work evaluation tool developed by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT), or its successor organization. Up to one-half (1/2) of the general education credit hours may be substituted for actual course work by obtaining a passing score on CLEP examinations. -
- (d) The applicant must make arrangements to have the credentials evaluated by FCCPT (Foreign Credentialing Commission on Physical Therapy, Inc.), or a service determined by the Board to be equivalent, and which must have a physical therapist consultant on its staff. The Board shall make its own review of applicant's educational program and is not bound by the findings of the credentialing service.
- (e) The applicant must provide the following information:
- (1) For examinations administered prior to August 1, 1998, proof that a score of 210 on the TSE (Test of Spoken English) or the SPEAK (Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit) examination was obtained;
 - (2) For examinations administered on or after August 1, 1998, and prior to January 1, 2007, proof that a minimum score of 50 on the TSE examination or the SPEAK examination was obtained, a minimum score on the Test of Written English (TWE) of 4.5 was obtained, and a minimum score of 560 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was obtained;
 - (3) For examinations administered on or after September 25, 2005, proof that the applicant obtained the following minimum standard scale scores in each of the four scoring domains (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking), and the total score of

- (4) the iBT/Next Generation TOEFL: Writing: 24, Speaking: 26, Reading Comprehension: 21, Listening Comprehension: 18, Total Score: 89; or
Proof that English is the applicant's primary language.

History Note: Filed as a Temporary Amendment Eff. July 21, 1995, for a period of 180 days or until the permanent Rule becomes effective, whichever is sooner;
Authority G.S. 90-270.26; 90-270.29; 90-270.30; 90-270.31;
Eff. December 30, 1985;
Amended Eff. December 1, 2006; November 1, 2004; August 1, 2002; August 1, 1998; February 1, 1996;
October 1, 1995; November 1, 1991; August 1, 1991.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Application forms may be downloaded off our website, www.ncptboard.org. Completed forms should be returned with the non-refundable application fee.

EXAMINATION

North Carolina uses computer testing. Applications must be submitted to the Board at least thirty (30) days prior to applicant's preferred date to sit for the examination. Examinations are administered for the Board by the FSBPT at Sylvan/Prometric Technology Centers across the country.

ACCOMMODATIONS

In compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Board may grant accommodations to individuals who demonstrate and can document special needs. Accommodation Forms are available upon request. Requests for accommodations should be submitted to the Board sixty (60) days prior to the applicant's preferred date to sit for the examination.

RENEWAL OF LICENSE

All licensees shall apply to the Board each year, prior to January 31, for a renewal of licensure and pay the prescribed fee. Licenses not renewed will lapse on February 1 and the therapist or assistant may not continue to perform physical therapy in the State. It is recommended that licenses be renewed by January 1.

CONTINUING COMPETENCE

Rules that apply to the requirements for continuing competence became effective on January 1, 2009 can be located on the Board's web page.

REVIVAL OF LAPSED LICENSE - 21 NCAC 48G .0203

- (a) A licensee that has been lapsed less than one year may be reviewed by payment of the revival of lapsed license fee and the current year's renewal fee and by completion of the revival form.
- (b) A license that has lapsed more than one year but less than five years may be revived by completion of the revival form, and:
- (1) completing 30 units (if reviving a physical therapist license) or 20 units (if reviving a physical therapist assistant license) of continuing competence as provided in the Rules in this Subchapter,
 - (2) payment of the revival of lapsed license fee, and
 - (3) payment of the current year's renewal fee.
- (c) A license that has lapsed more than five years may be revived by completion of the application forms; and
- (1) passing the "PT exam" (if trained as a physical therapist) or the "PTA exam" (if trained as a physical therapist assistant);
 - (2) compiling at least 500 hours within the period of one year in the following manner: between 50 and 200 class hours of course work (ie, refresher course, continuing education, pertinent college courses) approved by the Board as designed to demonstrate proficiency in current physical therapy theory and practice, and the remaining hours working as an aide under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist; or
 - (3) endorsement of a current license in another state as provided by 21 NCAC 48B .0102.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.26; 90-270.32; 90-270.33
Eff. February 1, 1976; Readopted Eff. September 30, 1977; Amended Eff. January 1, 2009; August 1, 1998; August 1, 1991; October 1, 1989; April 1, 1989; May 1, 1988.

BOARD RULES

All rules are submitted to the Rules Review Commission and the Office of Administrative Hearings as required by the Administrative Procedures Act for review and filing. Public hearings are held in accordance with this Act prior to the adoption of rules by the Board. The current Rules are available on the web page (www.ncptboard.org).

COMPLAINTS [Anonymous complaints may not be investigated.]

To file a complaint with the Board, a person should send the following information in writing to the Executive Director:

1. name and address of person alleged to have violated the Practice Act,
2. succinct statement of conduct violating Act,
3. names and addresses of persons who can and will testify regarding unlawful contact,
4. name and address of complainant.

The Board will investigate complaints. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, an administrative hearing may be held.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

A licensee or person, firm, or corporation engaging in practice prohibited by G.S. 90-270.35 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Grounds for disciplinary action are listed in G.S. 90-270.36. Actions taken against an applicant or a licensee may include denial of license, suspension, revocation of a license, probation for a period of time not greater than three years, a warning or a reprimand. A hearing will be granted in any case of disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions are printed in the Board Newsletter and published on the web page (www.ncptboard.org).

SCOPE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY [*See Attachment*]

Physical Therapists

1. Determine the patient care plan;
2. May delegate patient treatments to competent persons being supervised;
3. Should be present in the facility when supervising an aide.

Physical Therapists may NOT:

1. Employ acts, tests, procedures, treatments and modalities in patient treatments that are beyond the scope of physical therapy practice.
2. Allow anyone being supervised to engage in acts beyond the scope allowed by the Practice Act.
3. Use roentgen rays, radioactive materials or order radiologic examinations. (*However, a physical therapist may request a radiologic consultation and review X-rays.*)
4. Perform surgery, manipulation of the spine unless prescribed by a physician licensed in NC, or make a medical diagnosis of disease.

Physical Therapist assistants

1. Assist in treatments to the extent allowed by the supervising PT and within the scope of the law;
2. May make modifications of treatment programs consistent with established patient care plan.

Physical Therapist assistants may NOT engage in

1. Practice requiring skills and knowledge of a physical therapist;
2. Acts beyond the scope of practice delegated by the supervising physical therapist;
3. Interpret and implement referrals of medical doctors or dentists;
4. Perform evaluations;
5. Make major modifications of treatment programs.

Physical Therapy Aides perform only the acts delegated by a licensed physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. The supervising physical therapist or physical therapist assistant must be present in the facility during treatment. The aide shall not engage in the independent performance of physical therapy practice.

USE OF TITLES

Only persons licensed by the North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners may use the title physical therapist or physical therapist assistant or any other words, letters, numerical codes or insignia indicating or implying a person is a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant or advertise the provisions of physical therapy service.

CLINICAL DESIGNATORS

The preferred clinical designator for a physical therapist is “**PT**” and the preferred clinical designator for a physical therapist assistant is “**PTA**”.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS – See Board’s rules (21 NCAC 48C .0102 and 21 NCAC 48C .0201)

Summary of Fees

Renewal (PT & PTA)	\$ 100.00
Revival Fee and Renewal Fee	130.00
Application Fee PT & PTA	150.00
Exam Cost (PT & PTA)**	370.00
Exam Retake Fee	60.00
Verification/Transfer Fee	30.00
Licensee Directory	10.00
License Card	10.00
Labels of Licensees (PT or PTA)	60.00
Certificate Replacement	30.00

**plus PT or PTA Application Fee

SUBCHAPTER 48C - SCOPE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE / SECTION .0100 - PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

21 NCAC 48C .0101 PERMITTED PRACTICE

(a) Physical therapy is presumed to include any acts, tests, procedures, modalities, treatments, or interventions that are routinely taught in educational programs or in continuing education programs for physical therapists and are routinely performed in practice settings.

(b) A physical therapist who employs acts, tests, procedures, modalities, treatments, or interventions in which professional training has been received through education or experience is considered to be engaged in the practice of physical therapy.

(c) A physical therapist must supervise physical therapist assistants, physical therapy aides, PT students and PTA students to the extent required under the Physical Therapy Practice Act and the Rules in this Chapter. Physical therapy aides include all non-licensed individuals aiding in the provision of physical therapy services.

(d) The practice of physical therapy includes tests of joint motion, muscle length and strength, posture and gait, limb length and circumference, activities of daily living, pulmonary function, cardio-vascular function, nerve and muscle electrical properties, orthotic and prosthetic fit and function, sensation and sensory perception, reflexes and muscle tone, and sensorimotor and other skilled performances; treatment procedures such as hydrotherapy, shortwave or microwave diathermy, ultrasound, infra-red and ultraviolet radiation, cryotherapy, electrical stimulation including transcutaneous electrical neuromuscular stimulation, massage, debridement, intermittent vascular compression, iontophoresis, machine and manual traction of the cervical and lumbar spine, joint mobilization, machine and manual therapeutic exercise including isokinetics and biofeedback; and training in the use of orthotic, prosthetic and other assistive devices including crutches, canes and wheelchairs. Physical therapy further includes:

- (1) examining (history, system review and tests and measures) individuals in order to determine a diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention within the physical therapist's scope of practice. Tests and measures include the following:
 - (A) aerobic capacity and endurance;
 - (B) anthropometric characteristics;
 - (C) arousal, attention, and cognition;
 - (D) assistive and adaptive devices;
 - (E) community and work (job/school/play) integration or reintegration;
 - (F) cranial nerve integrity;
 - (G) environmental, home, and work (job/school/play) barriers;
 - (H) ergonomics and body mechanics;
 - (I) gait, locomotion, and balance;
 - (J) integumentary integrity;
 - (K) joint integrity and mobility;
 - (L) motor function;
 - (M) muscle performance;
 - (N) neuromotor development and sensory integration;
 - (O) orthotic, protective and supportive devices;
 - (P) pain;
 - (Q) posture;
 - (R) prosthetic requirements;
 - (S) range of motion;
 - (T) reflex integrity;
 - (U) self-care and home management;
 - (V) sensory integrity; and
 - (W) ventilation, respiration, and circulation.
- (2) alleviating impairment and functional limitation by designing, implementing, and modifying therapeutic interventions that include the following:
 - (A) coordination, communication and documentation;
 - (B) patient/client-related instruction;
 - (C) therapeutic exercise (including aerobic conditioning);
 - (D) functional training in self-care and home management (including activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living);

- (E) functional training in community and work (jobs/school/play) integration or reintegration activities (including instrumental activities of daily living, work hardening, and work conditioning);
 - (F) manual therapy techniques (including mobilization and manipulation);
 - (G) prescription, application, and fabrication of assistive, adaptive, orthotic, protective, supportive, and prosthetic devices and equipment that is within the scope of practice of physical therapy;
 - (H) airway clearance techniques;
 - (I) wound management;
 - (J) electrotherapeutic modalities; and
 - (K) physical agents and mechanical modalities.
- (3) preventing injury, impairment, functional limitation, and disability, including the promotion and maintenance of fitness, health, and quality of life in all age populations.

History Note:

*Authority G.S. 90-270.24; 90-270.26;
Eff. December 30, 1985; Amended Eff. December 1, 2006; April 1, 2003; August 1, 2002; August 1, 1998; December 1, 1990; October 1, 1989; April 1, 1989.*