INPTRA Regulation Profile

Country: New Zealand

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Regulatory Model
Physiotherapy is a regulated profession in New Zealand. The Physiotherapy Board (Board) is the ‘responsible authority’ regulating the profession, whose responsibilities are dictated by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA). This legislation covers the lifespan of the regulated health professional and includes competence, conduct and fitness to practice issues.

Model Description
The titles physiotherapist, physical therapist, physiotherapy specialist and physio are protected under the HPCAA. To practice physiotherapy in New Zealand requires registration with the Board and a current Annual Practising Certificate (APC). There are two scopes of physiotherapy practice, namely general and physiotherapy specialist.

Graduates of the two New Zealand physiotherapy schools are eligible to register as the Board accredits their programmes and intuitions. Australian physiotherapy graduates are also eligible to register in New Zealand. This is due to the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 and the ‘Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australian & New Zealand’ (thresholds), which specifies key minimum competencies necessary to graduate in both countries. Overseas physiotherapy applicants are assessed on a case-by-case basis whereby their qualifications and experience is checked against the thresholds.

To renew an APC, a physiotherapist needs to declare they are ‘fit to practice’ and have completed the necessary minimum Board’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements. The CPD requirements are a professional development plan, a portfolio detailing 100 hours over three years in four categories (work-based, professional, formal, self-directed) with supporting evidence, three reflective practice statements (clinical, ethical, cultural), and evidence of a peer review. An audit of five percent of the profession is undertaken each year to verify compliance with the CPD requirements.

In 2018, the Board published the Physiotherapy Standards Framework, which included the revised Aotearoa New Zealand Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, 14 clinical and professional standards, and the thresholds. These documents indicate the minimum standards of physiotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Website:
https://www.physioboard.org.nz/

Resources:
Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003
Recertification guidelines
The Physiotherapy Standards framework 2018, which includes the Aotearoa New Zealand Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, the Physiotherapy Standards and the Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand.
Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997