



**2010 Minimum Eligibility Requirements
for All Physical Therapist Specialist Certification Examinations
(Cardiovascular & Pulmonary, Clinical Electrophysiologic,
Geriatric, Neurologic, Orthopaedic, Pediatric, Sports, Women's Health)**

1. Licensure

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

2. Fee Schedule

Applicants are required to pay application review and examination fees. The application review fee is non-refundable. Upon payment of your application review fee, applicants will be provided with a copy of the *Description of Advanced Clinical Practice (DACP)* or *Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)* as well as the appropriate Self-Assessment Tool for Physical Therapists. Fees for the 2010 specialist certification examinations are as follows:

	APTA Member	Non-APTA Member	Payment Due
Application Review	\$500	\$845	July 31, 2009 w/application July 1, 2009 for Cardiovascular & Clinical Electro w/application
Examination	\$800	\$1, 525	November 30, 2009
Total Fees	\$1, 300	\$2, 370	

3. Application Deadline

The application deadline for the 2010 specialty examination is postmarked by **July 31, 2009**. Examinations will be administered at Prometric Testing Centers throughout the U.S. from **February 27– March 13, 2010**.

4. Additional Minimum Eligibility Requirements by Specialty Area

Cardiovascular and Pulmonary

Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification

Applicants must be currently certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) by the American Heart Association.

Direct Patient Care

Applicants must submit evidence of 2,000 hours of direct patient care in the specialty area within the last ten (10) years. 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/client management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Specialty Practice: Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy (DSP)*. These elements, as defined in the *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice*, are examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention.

Practice Settings

The Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Specialty Council recommends that direct patient care include patient/client management of individuals with a primary injury, disease, or other condition involving the cardiovascular and pulmonary systems in both acute and rehabilitation settings.

Research

Applicants must submit written evidence of participation in a research process directly related to the specialty area within the last ten (10) years. This submission should be in the form of 1) a brief statement that describes your specific involvement, and 2) an abstract that summarizes the project in which you participated (written in standard

form: e.g., purpose, methods, results, and conclusions.) Acceptable research processes include: single-subject studies, treatment efficacy studies (e.g., quality assurance or utilization review), surveys, and formal clinical trials.

Clinical Electrophysiologic

Direct Patient Care/ Electrophysiologic Testing

Applicants must submit evidence of 2,000 hours of direct patient care in the specialty area within the last ten (10) years. 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. The applicant must include evidence of performing a minimum of 500 complete electroneuromyography examinations during those hours. The remainder of the patient hours may include observation of examinations and supervised examinations.

Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/client management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Specialty Practice: Clinical Electrophysiologic Physical Therapy* (DSP). These elements, as defined in the *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice*, are examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention.

Clinical Education

Applicants must submit evidence of clinical education experience in electrophysiologic testing, preferably under the direct supervision of a clinical electrophysiologist who meets the requirements for specialist certification.

Patient Reports and Testing Logs

Applicants are required to submit actual patient reports that have been completed within the last three (3) years (from August 1, 2006). Submitted cases must be representative of abnormal findings and include one of each of the following: (1) one report must be for a patient with a proximal level compromise representing a radiculopathic process. (2) one report must be for a patient demonstrating a peripheral nerve entrapment, and (3) one report must be for a patient demonstrating a polyneuropathic process. Applicants will be required to submit copies of testing logs performed for a three month period after August 1, 2008.

Geriatrics

Direct Patient Care

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. 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/client management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Advanced Clinical Practice: Geriatric Physical Therapy* (DACP). 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: Geriatric 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 APTA-credentialed clinical residency

to APTA's Post Graduate Certification Department, no later than one month before the examination window opens. The deadline for submitting this evidence is January 21, 2010 for the 2010 examination.

The Geriatric Specialty Council strongly recommends that specialty area experience be obtained in more than two areas of practice (such as acute care, outpatient, long-term care, home health care, subacute rehabilitation, short-term rehabilitation, or wellness center.) Please note that one facility could include multiple practice areas.

Neurologic

Direct Patient Care

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. 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/client management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Specialty Practice: Neurologic Physical Therapy* (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: Neurologic 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 APTA-credentialed clinical residency to APTA's Post Graduate Certification Department, no later than one month before the examination window opens. The deadline for submitting this evidence is January 21, 2010 for the 2010 examination.

The Neurologic Specialty Council strongly recommends that applicants gain direct patient care experience in a variety of practice settings and have participated in recent professional development activities.

Orthopaedics

Direct Patient Care

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. 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/client management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Specialty Practice: Orthopaedic Physical Therapy* (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: Orthopaedic 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 APTA-credentialed clinical residency to APTA's Post Graduate Certification Department, no later than one month before the examination window opens. The deadline for submitting this evidence is January 21, 2010 for the 2010 examination.

Pediatrics

Direct Patient Care

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. 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/client management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Specialty Practice: Pediatric Physical Therapy* (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: Pediatric 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 APTA-credentialed clinical residency to APTA's Post Graduate Certification Department, no later than one month before the examination window opens. The deadline for submitting this evidence is January 21, 2010 for the 2010 examination.

Sports

CPR Certification – The applicant must be currently certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) by completing the American Heart Association's BLS Healthcare Provider Course or American Red Cross course CPR for the Professional Rescuer.

Emergency Care Certification – The applicant must submit evidence of current first aid certification. Acceptable training includes 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.

Evidence of completion of CPR certification and Emergency Care Certification should be submitted with your application. If you are planning to take the American Red Cross Emergency Response course to meet the emergency care minimum eligibility requirements but have not completed the course at the time of the application deadline (July 31, 2009), please indicate the date of completion and the location where you will take the course.

Applicants who wish to have the specialty council evaluate whether an equivalent level emergency care training course meets the minimum eligibility requirements must submit information about the course (syllabus, description, textbook, etc.) to the Sport Specialty Council for review by **June 30, 2009** application deadline so

that information on the outcome of this review will be available at the time prior to the time that you submit your application on **July 31st**.

The request and materials to be reviewed are to be mailed to the following address:

Specialty Council for Sports Physical Therapy
c/o Department of Post Graduate Certification
American Physical Therapy Association
1111 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Direct Patient Care

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

Option A

Applicants must submit evidence of 2,000 hours of direct patient care in the specialty area within the last ten (10) years. 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. Direct patient care must include activities in each of the elements of patient/client management applicable to the specialty area and included in the *Description of Specialty Practice: Sports Physical Therapy* (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) in sports physical therapy. 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 APTA-credentialed clinical residency to APTA's Post Graduate Certification Department, no later than one month before the examination window opens. The deadline for submitting this evidence is January 21, 2010 for the 2010 examination.

Women's Health

Direct Patient Care

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, 25% (500) of which must have occurred within the last three (3) years. Applicants must also submit (1) one case reflection demonstrating specialty practice in women's health. This case study must be based on a patient/client seen within the last three (3) years.

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: Women's Health Physical Therapy (DSP)*. Experience from residencies in which the curriculum plan reflects only a portion of the DSP will not be considered. Applicants applying under Option B must also submit one case study demonstrating specialty practice in women's health. This case study must be based on a patient/client seen within the last three (3) years.

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 APTA-credentialed clinical residency to APTA's Post Graduate Certification Department, no later than one month before the examination window opens. The deadline for submitting this evidence is January 21, 2010 for the 2010 examination.

5. Application

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

6. Applying for a Second Area of Certification

Applicants must submit a complete set of application materials and fees for each specialist certification exam. ABPTS policy does not permit an applicant who applies for certification in a second specialty area to submit the same direct patient hours for more than one specialty area. Specialty councils will review previously submitted applications for duplication of hours. The ABPTS and specialty councils do not recommend that applicants apply in more than one specialty area during the same year.

7. 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 *Physical Therapy: Description of Advanced Clinical Practice (DACP)/ Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)*. The DACP/DSP includes content related to the knowledge base for the specialty. Refer to the exam content outline included in the application and the DACP/DSP book for detailed information on the exam.

8. Application Booklet

The information booklet and application will be available by April 2009, and may be downloaded at no cost from APTA's Post Graduate Certification Department Website (www.apta.org/specialist_certification.)

A print version of the information booklet and application will also be available by the end April, for a fee of \$15. If you wish to purchase a copy please contact the **Post Graduate Certification Department at (800) 999-8520** or at **Spec-cert@apta.org**