Information Paper on Master programmes in Physiotherapy within the ER-WCPT

ADOPTED at the General Meeting 27-29 May 2010
Berlin, Germany
European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy

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Following the 2nd Education Congress where it was discussed and recommended to the Education Matters Working Group (WG) and ER-WCPT to explore the options for developing a Master Programme in Physiotherapy, more its structure than its content, the below activities and actions have been undertaken.

At its first meeting, on 24 – 25 October 2008, Wien, Austria, the Education WG agreed that during the last years the discussion had been focused in basic education and entry level and should also be at Masters Level. For this reason and in order to start to work on this project the WG members agreed the following actions:

1. **Priority** – Mapping / gather information about who was already offering master programmes of physiotherapy. If existing, about their first cycle /second cycle relation and their fields/areas. It would be also explored if they were multi professional. This information would be gathered through a questionnaire to the MOs and through ENPHE.

2. Explore laws and Erasmus opportunities for consortia and joint and double degrees. This action would be developed through a review of literature and asking other professions, such as Occupational Therapists.

3. Identify possible models for the master programmes. Models of learning and attendance. Length of the period of studies. Flexibility and opportunities for different target groups.

4. Levels of descriptors and competences for a Master in Physiotherapy. For the development of this task a review of literature would be made and the information for the EQF and Dublin Descriptors would be used.

5. Prepare a structure of the recommendation / framework for a master programme in Physiotherapy. The recommendation would take into consideration that Physiotherapy is a scientific discipline and regulated profession, and also the delivery of services.
Adopted Information paper on Master programmes in Physiotherapy within the ER-WCPT General Meeting of the European Region of the WCPT 2010

It was also agreed that at the next meeting, the WG would make a decision about the possibility to propose an extraordinary GM in 2009 to approve the recommendation for a master programme in physiotherapy.

At its second meeting, on 27 – 28 February 2009, Copenhagen, Denmark, it was reported that a questionnaire was sent to the Member Organisations, according to the first meeting conclusions, asking them the following questions:

- How many Higher Education Institutions do you have offering BSC’s in Physiotherapy?
- How many of these Higher Education Institutions offer Post Registration Master level programmes in
  - Physiotherapy specific Masters (i.e. musculoskeletal, neurology, etc)
  - Multi-professional Masters programmes.
- Please list the Higher Education Institutions in your country offering the above programmes with the name, address, a contact name and e-mail contact.

The purpose of this action was mapping the situation at Region’s level. 22 Member Organisations answered to the letter / questionnaire.

According to the answers received, the Education WG discussed and agreed the following basic assumptions:

1. HEIs and ER-WCPT must cooperate in order to create learning opportunities relevant to the development of the profession
2. The establishment of master programmes is an initiative of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and so the ER-WCPT can only indirectly influence the process;
3. “True” European master programmes need to be developed by consortia of HEI’s, using for instance ERASMUS MUNDUS, and recommendations for this type of programmes already exists;
4. ER-WCPT must observe what has been the development and trends of master programmes at European (and international level in general), as part of the CPD and support for career and specialisation pathways;
5. ER-WCPT may identify resources and promote the basis for networking;
6. Based on the observation of the actual situation and major resources, ER-WCPT can make recommendations to the HEIs;
7. Cooperation with ENPHE on this issue is relevant.
It was also agreed that it would not be necessary an extraordinary GM in 2009 to approve the recommendation for a master programme in physiotherapy.

The WG also agreed the two following actions

1. To prepare a database of existing Masters in the European Region using the information received from the MOs. The database would have the following information:
   - Country
   - Identification of HEI
   - website
   - Title of course
   - Specific for PTs, Multiprofessional planned to include physios or information not available
   - Date of inclusion of information

2. To explore the HEI’s models/structure of master programmes. Since, a workshop on this issue would take place in liaison with the next ENPHE conference in 26 – 28 March, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands; it was agreed to follow up the results of the workshop.

The issues to explore would be:
   - Title
   - General profile of the programme
   - Number of ECTS and their distributions by scientific areas (if possible show it in a diagram)
   - Indicative topics for each area
   - Evaluation requirements including the final project

At its third meeting, on 4 – 5 September 2009, Wien, Austria, the Education WG reviewed the information gathered from the 22 MOs mapping the Masters situation at Region’s level.

Based on the information gathered, it was agreed as follows:
1. It could not be possible to have a database of existing Masters in the European Region using the information received from the MOs since it would be difficult to keep it updated and accurate.

2. An information report about the actions undertaken would be prepared to inform the General Meeting.

Final remarks:

a) The information received from the MOs is available under request to the ER-WCPT secretariat.

b) The follow up of Masters Programmes in Physiotherapy within the ER WCPT will continue, in collaboration with ENPHE.