

INPTRA Regulation Profile

Country: Australia

Regulatory Model

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law ('the National Law') as in force in each State and Territory of Australia regulates physiotherapists and 13 other health professions. Essentially, it is the same state-based law passed at the same time, creating a national law. The National Law requires physiotherapy practitioners to be registered with the Physiotherapy Board of Australia ('the Board') in order to use the title "physiotherapist" or "physical therapist" and to perform the restricted practice of manipulation of the cervical spine. The Board does not define a physiotherapist's scope of practice. However, all practitioners must adhere to the Board's Code of conduct. Physiotherapy students of approved programs of study are also registered under the National Law.

Model Description

The Board (comprising 8 practitioner and 4 community members), works in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to administer the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme ('the National Scheme') set up by the National Law.

The functions of the Board and AHPRA are defined in the National Law and must be exercised in accordance with its objectives and guiding principles. The functions of the Board include:

- registering suitably qualified and competent persons as physiotherapists;
- developing and approving registration and accreditation standards;
- approving accredited programs of physiotherapy study;
- overseeing the assessment process for overseas trained physiotherapists;
- overseeing the processes for notifications (complaints) about the professional conduct, performance or health of physiotherapists, except in:
 - New South Wales (NSW) where this is undertaken by the Health Professional Councils Authority, the NSW Physiotherapy Council, and the NSW [NSW Health Care Complaints Commission](#), and
 - Queensland (QLD) where it may be undertaken by the Qld Health Ombudsman; and
- in conjunction with AHPRA, keeping an up to date national register of physiotherapists so important information about the registration of individual health practitioners is available to the public.

The Board has published [Regulatory Principles](#) that further define its functions in providing proportionate responses to identified risks to public harm.

The secretariat for all of the 14 health professions regulated under the National Law is housed in the same building, allowing for efficient and rapid cross-professional consultation on regulatory matters of common interest.

Registered physiotherapists may practice anywhere in Australia (as opposed to having to register in every state). In order to be eligible for registration, physiotherapists must have a Board approved qualification from a recognised education provider and meet the Board's registration standards. The Australian Physiotherapy Council (the APC) is appointed by the Board to provide accreditation functions under the National Law. This includes accrediting programs of physiotherapy study and recommending their approval by the Board. There is no exam required for applicants for general registration from approved programs of study in order to undertake entry-level practice.

Under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement, physiotherapists registered in New Zealand and holding a current Annual Practising Certificate are eligible for registration in Australia. The two countries have shared entry level practice statements (Binational physiotherapy practice statements) for the physiotherapy profession. Other overseas trained practitioners may be eligible for limited registration, however must complete an assessment process conducted by the APC, including written and clinical examinations, in order to be eligible for general registration. Some overseas trained applicants require a [skills assessment](#) as part of the application process for a work visa in Australia. This assessment is also conducted by the APC.

Website

www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au

Resources

- [The National Law](#)
- [When is it necessary to be registered as a physiotherapist?](#)
- [Registration Standards](#)
 - Continuing Professional Development Registration Standard
 - Criminal History Registration Standard
 - English Language Skills Registration Standard
 - Professional Indemnity Insurance Registration Standard
 - Recency of Practice Registration Standard
- [Registration Codes, Standards and Guidelines](#)
 - Code of Conduct for registered physiotherapists
 - Guidelines for advertising regulated health services
- Australian [Physiotherapy](#) Council
 - [Accreditation Standard](#) Requirements
 - [Overseas trained practitioners assessment process](#)
 - [The Binational physiotherapy practice thresholds](#)

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