

**GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY
BOARD POLICIES**

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Policy #1 - General Application Information

1.(a) Applications and reinstatement applications will be approved administratively once all criteria as outlined in the law and board rules have been met.

- The staff will not administratively approve any applications with an affirmative answer to the conviction or board sanction question.

A “yes” response for failure of the examination may be administratively approved in compliance with the Board’s rules and other policies. All administratively issued licenses are considered for a vote to ratify at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The average processing time for a complete application is approximately fifteen (15) working days.

1.(b) Applications received that report only one (1) DUI, verified by a GCIC report as the only criminal activity (GCIC to be run by Enforcement), can be approved administratively by the designated board member. These administratively issued licenses will be considered for a vote to ratify at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy revised at June 19, 2010 meeting.

Policy revised at May 17, 2011 meeting.

Policy #2 - Examination applications (Board Rule 490-2-.02)

2. (a) Effective November 21, 2011, the Board will make eligible, applicants for licensure by examination upon receipt of proof from either the College / University Registrar, Dean, PT or PTA Program Director at the applicant’s CAPTE-accredited PT / PTA program stating that the applicant has successfully completed the Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant program but is awaiting degree conferment. The Board has provided, as part of the application, a form that must be completed by the appropriate school representative and submitted to the Board.

2. (b) The Board has designated a board member to review all non-CAPTE and all foreign educated examination applications for approval.

2. (c) An applicant that has not passed the national physical therapy examination by the fourth (4th) time will not be allowed to sit for the examination for a 5th time without extensive further study, which may include completing a physical therapy educational program approved by the Commission on Physical Therapy Education of the American Physical Therapy Association.

2. (d) Applicants for initial licensure by exam may take the Ethics & Jurisprudence exam within 180 days of anticipated date of graduation.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy amended at the November 15, 2011 meeting.

Policy #3 - Endorsement applications

3.(a) The Board has designated a board member to review all non-CAPTE and all foreign educated examination applications for approval.

3.(b) Endorsement applicants who have passed the examination within one (1) year of graduation may apply by examination instead of endorsement and must submit verification of licensure from every state in which they have held a license.

3(c) All endorsement applicants must take and pass the Georgia law exam. Candidates must register for the exam through the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT).

3 (d) An applicant who has taken the NPTE four or more times before receiving a passing score on the exam will be required to submit further evidence of competency or stipulations as determined by the Board.

Policy approved at the September 18, 2007 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy revised at June 19, 2010 meeting

Policy #4 - Renewal Applications

4.(a) A renewal applicant who answers “no” to the continuing competency question must provide proof of completion of the continuing competency requirement.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the June 19, 2010 meeting.

Policy #5 - Traineeship

5.(a) The Board has designated a board member to review all non-CAPTE and all foreign educated examination applications for approval.

5.(b) Once Traineeship Supervision is approved, a letter will be sent to the physical therapist approved as the supervisor that all supervision must be in compliance with board rule 490-2-.04.

5. (c) Board voted to allow for early exit from traineeships once the individual passes the NPTE. And supervisor's submission of documentation showing successful practice under the traineeship.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the June 19, 2010 meeting.

Policy revised (added 5(c) at May 17, 2011 meeting

Policy #6 – Reinstatement

6.(a) All licensees who fail to renew their license by the established deadline are placed in “lapsed” status and must reinstate his/her license. Reinstatement applicants who state on the reinstatement application that they have practiced without a current license are considered for reinstatement under the following conditions:

- Public Consent Order with Public Reprimand
- \$25 fine for each day of unlicensed practice
- Must take & pass the law exam within 6 months of the docket date of the consent order.
- Must report period of unlicensed practice to employer

Policy approved at the August 17, 2004 meeting.

Policy revised at September 2008 meeting

Policy reaffirmed at January 2009 meeting

Policy #7 - Continuing Competence Policy

The Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy requires each licensed physical therapist and physical therapist assistant to participate in a minimum number of thirty (30) clock hours of experience to promote continuing competence (CC) per licensure period. **The Board has defined the requirements for competence as planned learning experiences which have content beyond the licensee's present level of knowledge and competence which may be subject to audit by the board.** Content of the experience must relate to patient care in physical therapy whether the subject is research, treatment, documentation, education, management, or some other content area. The purpose of this

requirement is to assist in assuring safe and effective practices in the provision of physical therapy services to the citizens of Georgia. In the event that a licensee does not meet this requirement; the license will not be renewed.

On-line CC may be considered as Class I or Class II dependent upon the course content.

The following are programs which may be included for approval; however, approval is not limited to these programs.

The following programs may be considered for Class I approval, but are not limited to:

- (a) Programs approved by the American Physical Therapy Association and its affiliate components; or
- (b) Programs approved by the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia or any other state chapters; or
- (c) Programs approved by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy; or
- (d) Programs provided at CAPTE-Accredited colleges and universities with programs in physical therapy when the continuing competency course is held under the auspices of the school of physical therapy; or
- (e) Programs provided by the American Academy of Physical Therapy; or
- (f) Programs approved by another state board; or
- (g) Programs provided at JCAHO-accredited healthcare organizations; or
- (h) Programs provided by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons; or
- (i) Programs provided by the National Athletic Trainers Association; or
- (j) Programs provided by the American Dental Association; or
- (k) Programs provided by the American Association of Nurses; or
- (l) Programs provided by the American Occupational Therapy Association; or
- (m) Fifteen (15) hours for undergoing a peer review; or
- (n) Ten (10) hours for conducting a peer review when that activity is an adjunct responsibility and not the primary employment; or
- (o) Participation as a presenter for continuing education courses, workshops, seminars or symposia which have been approved by the approved list above; Continuing competence credit is based on contact hours and may not exceed 10 hours per topic;
- (p) Authorship of a presented scientific poster, scientific platform presentation or published article; Continuing competence credit is 10 hours per event and may not exceed 20 hours;
- (q) Teaching a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant credit course when that teaching is an adjunct responsibility and not the primary employment; Continuing competence credit is based on contact hours not to exceed 20 hours;
- (r) Certification of clinical specialization by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties. Continuing competence credit is 30 hours and is recognized only in the biennium in which certification or recertification is awarded.
- (s) Post professional physical therapist educational programs that award academic credit are counted as one (1) university credit hour equaling ten (10) continuing competency hours. For example, a two (2) credit hour course in which a passing grade is achieved would equal twenty (20) continuing competency hours.

The following programs may be considered for Class II approval (limited to 10 hours):

- (a) Self- instruction from reading professional literature; Continuing competence credit is limited to a maximum of five (5) hours; or
- (b) Attendance at a scientific poster session, lecture, panel, symposium or university course that does not meet the criteria for Class I; Continuing competency credit is one hour per contact hour of activity; or
- (c) Acting as a clinical education instructor for an accredited physical therapist or physical therapist assistant educational program; Continuing competence credit is one (1) hour per eight (8) contact hours; or
- (d) Acting as a clinical instructor or an intern for a formal, nonacademic, advanced clinical internship or as a mentor or a learner for a formal, nonacademic mentorship.

Policy approved at the October 31, 2007 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy revised at June 19, 2010 meeting

Policy amended at the November 3, 2009 meeting (addressing on-line courses)

Policy amended at the March 2011 meeting (adding (s))

Policy amended at the May 2011 meeting (amended (s))

Policy #8 - COGNIZANT MATTERS/ INVESTIGATIONS/DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

8.(a) In compliance with Georgia law, the Board maintains strict confidentiality of investigations of alleged violations of the Board's Laws and Rules and the identity of the individuals involved. To this end the Board has adopted the use of a member of the Board to act as Cognizant. The Cognizant member shall have access to all records and documents relating to the complaint and investigations. The Cognizant member shall not disclose information leading to the identity of the involved persons until such time as the Board votes to pursue formal disciplinary action. In addition to processing as a complaint for board review, all complaints received alleging irregular insurance billing practices will automatically be referred to the Insurance Commissioner's Office for investigation and to the appropriate agencies for Medicaid and Medicare fraud.

8.(b) Cognizant Review: The board staff shall receive all complaints of alleged violations of the Board's laws and rules and present complaints to the cognizant member. The complainant will be notified in an appropriate timeframe that the complaint has been received by the board office and has been forwarded to the cognizant member for review and action.

The cognizant member shall have the following authority:

1. Recommend to full board that complaint be dismissed due to no alleged violation of the laws or rules.
2. Refer for investigation directly to the Enforcement Division.
3. Conduct an investigative interview,
4. After investigation is complete, make a recommendation to the full Board for one of the following:
 - a. Close – No violation
 - b. Sanction if investigative findings are that a violation has

occurred.

8.(c) In all situations, the Cognizant member shall report to the Board the actions taken regarding the investigation of the complaint.

8.(d) The Cognizant member timely receive copies of Enforcement Referrals and/or Dispositions to investigations on each case.

8.(e) All requests for additional information, from staff or cognizant member should be in writing.

8.(f) If a matter has been referred to the AG's office for a consent order, the order will include the requirement that the disciplined licensee must take and receive a passing score on the jurisprudence examination within 3 months of the docket date of the order.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy revised at June 19, 2010 meeting

Policy #9 – PEER REVIEW

9(a) Individuals working as peer reviewers for the board must have no disciplinary history, current clinical expertise of five (5) years experience and be capable of providing an expert opinion on the subject matter and to general questions of patient care, record keeping and billing. Peer reviewers are selected by the Board on a case-by-case basis.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy #10 - Mental Physical Evaluations

10.(a) The Board will accept the guidelines for mental physical evaluations as provided by O.C.G.A § 43-33-18(a)(2).

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy #11 - MEETINGS/RECORDS

Policy Review

11.(a) The Board will hold an annual policy review.

Minutes

11.(b) Draft minutes and the board agenda will be provided to the Board at least one (1) week prior to the Board meeting or conference call.

11.(c) Arrival and departure times of Board members will be noted in the minutes.

Meetings

11.(d) Meetings will be held as established by yearly calendar that is approved by the Board. Changes to the meeting dates and times may be called when necessary.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy revised at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy revised at the July 2010 meeting.

Policy #12 – POSITION ON MEDICATIONS

12.(a) The Georgia State Board of Physical Therapy, adopts the APTA position of Medications in the Provision of Physical Therapy which states:

The scope of practice of physical therapy often requires the use of medications in the course of patient/client management, such as in the administration of phonophoresis, iontophoresis, nebulized bronchodilators, and in integumentary repair and protection. The application and storage of medications used in physical therapy is within the scope of physical therapy practice.

Policy approved at the March 16, 2004 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the July 2010 meeting.

Policy #13 – Ethics & Jurisprudence

The Board-approved Ethics & Jurisprudence continuing competency course must include a review of the Georgia General Provisions (Title 43 Chapter 1 -specifically 43-1-9 and 43-1-19 through 43-1-27), Georgia Physical Therapy Practice Act (Title 43 Chapter 33), Board Rules (Chapter 490), Board Policies and a general review of the Board's web-site www.sos.ga.gov/plb/pt to include the FAQ's.

A review of the Ethics and Jurisprudence exam will occur when the laws and rules change.

Policy approved at the May 8, 2007 meeting.

Policy revised at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy revised at the July 2010 meeting.

Policy #14 Foreign Credentialing

The Board requires sixty (60) hours of general education and ninety (90) hours of professional education for a total of 150 hours for foreign educated applicants. The Board further authorizes the use of the Retro Tools for applicants educated prior to 1997.

The Board approved foreign credentialing agencies are ICA, IERF and FCCPT.

Policy approved at the May 20, 2008 meeting

Policy revised at the January 2009 meeting.

Policy revised at the July 2010 meeting.

Policy #15 Residency Programs

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §43-33-1, the Board will consider for approval educational institutions for the purposes of offering programs to develop advanced physical therapy skills. All educational institutions that are providing such advanced training must petition the Board prior to allowing practice of residents/fellows unlicensed in Georgia and enrolled in said program.

Policy approved at the May 4, 2010 meeting.

Policy reaffirmed at the July 2010 meeting.