

APA CHARTER OF EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

SECTION 2

APA SPORTS PHYSIOTHERAPY COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Background

Development of the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards commenced in 1996 following a suggestion by the APA House of Delegates that all APA National Special Groups develop a formal course review process to assist in the recognition of postgraduate qualifications within their membership structure. Since that time, the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards have been developed by the National Sports Physiotherapy Group (NSPG) in consultation with the Heads of Schools of Physiotherapy in Australia, the course coordinators of sports physiotherapy courses in Australia, and members of the profession with clinical expertise in sports physiotherapy. This is the fourth draft of the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards.

In 1998, the NSPG created a membership category that allows physiotherapists to use the title "APA Sports Physiotherapist". Admission requirements for the titled membership category include completion of a postgraduate course in sports physiotherapy. Titled membership of the NSPG is currently one of the selection criteria for physiotherapists to work with the Australian team at the 2000 Olympics - use of the title "APA Sports Physiotherapist" represents an advanced standard of expertise or competence in sports physiotherapy practice. The APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards describe the minimum standards of competency determined by the NSPG for physiotherapists completing a postgraduate course in sports physiotherapy. The APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards form part of the NSPG specialisation process.

Preamble

The Australian Olympic and Commonwealth games teams, many national sporting organizations as well as professional athletes and teams use the services of Sports Physiotherapists on an on-going basis during training and competition. Amateur and recreational sports participants¹, as well as those pursuing non-competitive health and exercise goals are increasingly using the services of Sports Physiotherapists.

Sports physiotherapy is an area of clinical speciality that involves the assessment, diagnosis and management of athletes¹. This area of practice is inclusive of all types of athletes regardless of age, gender, occupation, sport, lifestyle or disability. In addition to entry level musculoskeletal physiotherapy knowledge and skills, physiotherapists working in this area of practice require advanced knowledge, understanding and skills relevant and specific to sports physiotherapy. In particular, a competent sports physiotherapist demonstrates the following:

- an understanding of physiotherapy in the context of sport
- working knowledge related to the role of the sports health team and the importance of working relationships within the sports model

¹ The terms "sports participant" and "athlete" used in this document refer to a person who undertakes regular physical exercise/activity. The physical activity may be at any level - as part of a structured or unstructured program, and in a non-competitive or competitive environment.

- an ability to apply knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure physiotherapy intervention strategies, including injury prevention, meet the specific needs of individual athletes
- a respect for age and physical ability in the context of sport
- an appreciation of the importance of research as a basis for evidence-based sports physiotherapy practice

Sports Physiotherapy often includes assessment and treatment of sports participants during on-field training and competition as well as in a clinical setting. Sports physiotherapists often work with other professions to form a Sports Health Team. The Sports Health team may include a sports physician, an orthopaedic surgeon, a sports dietician, a sport psychologist, a podiatrist, a massage therapist, a biomechanist, a sports scientist, a strength and conditioning coach and other allied sports professionals. Sports physiotherapists usually apply their skills within a Sports Model. The Sports Model recognises the integral relationships and consultation between the sports health team and the sports coach, sports team members and sports team management staff. Sports physiotherapists are often required to travel with sports participants who are training and competing at interstate and overseas venues.

Philosophy

The growth of Sports Physiotherapy in clinical settings has been accompanied by an increase in the number of postgraduate courses in sports physiotherapy offered by Universities in Australia. The philosophy of the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards is to promote and support courses that are of high quality and meet the needs of the profession in the area of sports physiotherapy. The principal intent of APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards is to define standards for NSPG recognition of postgraduate courses in sports physiotherapy.

The APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards are specific to sports physiotherapy and are intended to be used in conjunction with the course evaluation process described in Section 1 of the APA Charter of Educational Standards. The principal intention of the use of the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards together with the course evaluation process described in the Charter is to assist the NSPG in the recognition of courses as part of their specialisation process. In particular, the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards recognise the attributes that underlie competencies specific to Sports Physiotherapy practice as well as attributes that are required for life long learning.

The relevance of some aspects of the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards may alter with time and the document must be considered in a dynamic framework that requires regular revision and amendment to reflect changes in sports physiotherapy practice. Annual revisions will include input from course coordinators of postgraduate sports physiotherapy courses in Australia and New Zealand and members of the profession with clinical expertise in sports physiotherapy.

Sports Physiotherapy Course Evaluation Process

The course evaluation process is described in Section 1 of the APA Charter of Educational Standards. The NSPG is the relevant APA National Special Group with respect to the evaluation of sports physiotherapy courses. A Charter Manager who reports to the NPDC will be responsible for the administration of the course evaluation process. A Course Review Panel will conduct the course evaluation process. The Review Panel for each sports physiotherapy course will be appointed by the NSPG in consultation with the respective Head of School.

A postgraduate sports physiotherapy course will be recognized by the NSPG when the Course Review Panel determines that students completing the course achieve at least 60% of the performance criteria for every element of competency described in this document.

Competency Standards for Sports Physiotherapy

Competencies are a combination of attributes that underlie some aspect of professional performance¹. It must be emphasised that the competency standards defined in this document address the most significant competencies required by a physiotherapist completing a University based postgraduate course in sports physiotherapy. It must be noted that the scope of sports physiotherapy practice encompasses other competencies that have not been included in these standards, but will be achieved during some postgraduate courses.

Whilst the competencies are defined within areas, interdependence of these areas is assumed for clinical practice. Each area of competency is further described in terms of the identifiable, constituent components. These components are referred to as elements. Each element of competency is further defined by one or more performance criteria.

The performance criteria provide outcome-based measures that define the minimum standards of performance expected of a physiotherapist who is completing a postgraduate course in sports physiotherapy. It is expected that a physiotherapist would need to meet the majority of performance criteria for every element of competency to be deemed competent in sports physiotherapy.

Areas of Competency in Sports Physiotherapy

As a physiotherapist acquires advanced knowledge and skills in physiotherapy practice, the core areas of competency described in the Australian Physiotherapy Competency Standards (1994) become highly integrated and translate to advanced levels of competency. The areas of competency described in the APA Sports Physiotherapy Competency Standards are advanced competencies considered to be important for effective performance in sports physiotherapy. The competencies represent the integration of elements of competency and relevant attributes that should be possessed by a sports physiotherapist. The areas of competency considered most important for effective performance in sports physiotherapy are:

1. **Sports Specific Approach**
Applies advanced knowledge and understanding relevant to sports physiotherapy practice
2. **Assessment**
Assesses the athlete's abilities, problems and needs through appropriate history taking, interview and physical examination
3. **Interpretation and Management Plan**
Develops an appropriate sports physiotherapy clinical management plan based on interpretation of assessment findings
4. **Sports Physiotherapy Management and Intervention Skills**

¹ Australian Physiotherapy Competency Standards (1994)

Implements and evaluates the effectiveness of a Sports Physiotherapy clinical management plan

5. Communication

Demonstrates the capacity to communicate effectively and appropriately with the athlete, members of the sports health team and other personnel within the sports model, including professional peers

6. Documentation

Documents and reports on Sports Physiotherapy clinical management and other activities relevant to the practice of sports physiotherapy in a timely and appropriate manner

7. Professional, Legal and Ethical Approach

Demonstrates professional behaviour appropriate to sports physiotherapy

8. Role as a Service Provider

Recognises the role of a sports physiotherapist as a service provider within the health care system

More detailed explanations of each area are in the Appendix.

Attributes of a competent sports physiotherapist

The level of competence of a physiotherapist is contingent upon possession of relevant attributes¹. It is the integration of the specific attributes and elements of competency that expresses the unique aspects of sports physiotherapy practice.

The competent sports physiotherapist will have an integration of the following attributes:

- advanced knowledge of aspects of biomedical and clinical sciences relevant to sports injury management and prevention
- understanding of the role of the physiotherapist in the sports team environment
- advanced interpretation and problem solving skills
- advanced technical skills and psychomotor abilities
- advanced communication skills
- professional attitudes, behaviour and ethics

These attributes enable the competent sports physiotherapist to address the specific needs of individual sports participants.

¹ Australian Physiotherapy Competency Standards (1994)

Areas and Elements of Sports Physiotherapy Competency

Area 1: Applies advanced knowledge and understanding relevant to sports physiotherapy practice

- 1.1 Demonstrates an advanced knowledge of sport in injury management and prevention.
- 1.2 Demonstrates an understanding of the role of the physiotherapist in the overall structure of a sports team.
- 1.3 Develops and implements basic strategies to support and promote the relationships and consultation that are integral to the sports model.
- 1.4 Demonstrates an understanding of the theoretical bases for application of the scientific method in the practice of Sports Physiotherapy
- 1.5 Demonstrates skills to acquire and manage knowledge within the context of Sports Physiotherapy practice.

Area 2: Assesses the athlete's abilities, problems and needs through appropriate history taking, interview and physical examination

- 2.1 Applies knowledge of the relevant clinical and biomedical sciences and the clinical reasoning process during assessment of the athlete.
- 2.2 Collects history and supplementary data relevant to Sports Physiotherapy and the needs of the athlete.
- 2.3 Collects quantitative and qualitative data relevant to Sports Physiotherapy and the needs of the athlete.
- 2.4 Makes justifiable decisions regarding a diagnosis reflecting current knowledge of neuromusculoskeletal pathophysiology relevant to sports physiotherapy.
- 2.5 Demonstrates an understanding of clinical patterns encountered in sports physiotherapy practice.
- 2.6 Establishes the need for referral and further investigation of the athlete.
- 2.7 Documents sports physiotherapy assessment findings accurately.
- 2.8 Recognises the scope of sports physiotherapy assessment.

Area 3: Develops an appropriate sports physiotherapy clinical management plan based on interpretation of assessment findings

- 3.1 Develops a logical rationale for the most appropriate physiotherapy management strategies to meet the athlete's needs.
- 3.2 Establishes short and long term goals relevant to the most appropriate Sports Physiotherapy management to meet the athlete's needs within the context of the sports model.
- 3.3 Develops a clinical Sports Physiotherapy management plan based on current scientific knowledge and contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practices for the athlete's presenting condition.
- 3.4 Incorporates relevant evaluation procedures within the Sports Physiotherapy management plan.

Area 4: Implements and evaluates the effectiveness of a sports physiotherapy clinical management plan

- 4.1 Ensures the safe and effective implementation of appropriate Sports Physiotherapy clinical management at an advanced level.
- 4.2 Effectively evaluates the results of Sports Physiotherapy clinical management
- 4.3 Makes appropriate judgments of the effectiveness of Sports Physiotherapy clinical management
- 4.4 Makes appropriate modifications to Sports Physiotherapy clinical management in response to the evaluation process.

Area 5: Demonstrates the capacity to communicate effectively and appropriately with the athlete, members of the sports health team and other personnel within the sports model, including professional peers

- 5.1 Communicates effectively with the athlete and the sports health team.
- 5.2 Demonstrates tact and sensitivity when communicating with the athlete.
- 5.3 Responds professionally to information conveyed by the athlete.
- 5.4 Appraises literature and presents relevant information effectively to groups of people such as professional peers, sports team personnel and the wider community.

Area 6: Documents and reports on Sports Physiotherapy clinical management and other activities relevant to the practice of sports physiotherapy in a timely and appropriate manner

- 6.1 Prepares reports on physiotherapy management and other activities relevant to the practice of sports physiotherapy within appropriate timeframes.
- 6.2 Recognises the importance of clearly documenting details of physiotherapy assessment and intervention and other activities relevant to the practice of sports physiotherapy within appropriate timeframes.
- 6.3 Demonstrates appropriate knowledge of relevant medico-legal requirements when preparing documentation.

Area 7: Demonstrates professional behaviour appropriate to sports physiotherapy

- 7.1 Demonstrates a commitment to optimal athlete management.
- 7.2 Demonstrates a commitment to excellence in Sports Physiotherapy.
- 7.3 Is committed to ethical practice for the Sports Physiotherapist and acts in accordance with legal requirements at all times.
- 7.4 Applies informed judgement and current scientific principles to sports physiotherapy practice.
- 7.5 Demonstrates an awareness of principles for safe practice and the relevance of workload issues in sports physiotherapy.

Area 8: Recognises the role of a sports physiotherapist as a service provider within the health care system

- 8.1 Demonstrates awareness of the role of Sports Physiotherapy in the current health system and relevant related systems and services.
- 8.2 Understands the central role of working with sports participants in the practice of sports physiotherapy.

Performance Criteria for Assessment of Competency Standards in Sports Physiotherapy

Area 1: Applies advanced knowledge and understanding relevant to sports physiotherapy

Element 1.1 Demonstrates an advanced knowledge of sport in injury management and prevention

- 1.1a Demonstrates a working knowledge of the mechanisms, diagnosis and management of overuse and traumatic sports related injuries.
- 1.1b Demonstrates an understanding of the pathophysiology of trauma/injury to musculoskeletal tissues and other systems of the body.
- 1.1c Demonstrates a working knowledge and understanding of specific injury patterns within sport.
- 1.1d Demonstrates an understanding of preventative strategies specific for the athlete and team.
- 1.1e Understands the role and relevance of physiotherapy in the care of athletes with disabilities, in athletes with cardiorespiratory problems, in paediatric athletes, female athletes and older athletes.
- 1.1f Respects the right of each individual to set their goals and sport no matter their age or physical ability.

Element 1.2 Demonstrates an understanding of the role of the physiotherapist in the overall structure of a sports team.

- 1.2a Demonstrates a working knowledge of the specific roles of members of the sports health care team.
- 1.2b Demonstrates an understanding of the sports model and potential influences of the model on physiotherapy management and intervention.
- 1.2c Demonstrates a working knowledge of the factors that may impact on any sporting context such as social, cultural and environmental influences.
- 1.2d Understands the role and scope of physiotherapy in sports team care and travel.
- 1.2e Demonstrates a working knowledge of the role of physiotherapy within the sports model and can identify appropriate strategies when other factors interfere with physiotherapy management and intervention.

Element 1.3 Develops and implements basic strategies to support and promote the relationships and consultation that are integral to the sports model.

- 1.3a Identifies and implements preventative strategies specific to the sport, and team/individual.
- 1.3b Develops an appropriate plan to address the sports physiotherapy requirements of a sports team or sports participant pre, during and post season.
- 1.3c Demonstrates an ability to work as part of the sports health care team.
- 1.3d Assists the athlete to be an active decision-maker and participate in intervention processes and provides appropriate information to assist the athlete to make an informed decision.
- 1.3e Demonstrates excellent communication skills during interaction with the athlete, sports health team and personnel within the sports model.

Element 1.4 Demonstrates an understanding of the theoretical bases for application of the scientific method in the practice of Sports Physiotherapy

- 1.4a Understands the concepts of validity, reliability, test construction (including normative and criterion referenced) and theoretical bases of assessment tools consistent with current Sports Physiotherapy practice.
- 1.4b Demonstrates knowledge of the variety of assessment tools available for use in Sports Physiotherapy practice.
- 1.4c Recognises the need for and the role of research in advancing the body of knowledge in Sports Physiotherapy.

Element 1.5 Demonstrates skills to acquire and manage knowledge within the context of Sports Physiotherapy practice.

- 1.5a Demonstrates the ability to ask relevant questions.
- 1.5b Demonstrates the ability to appraise concepts and ideas.
- 1.5c Demonstrates the ability to think creatively and debate issues.
- 1.5d Demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge.
- 1.5e Demonstrates an understanding of the limitation of the current knowledge base.
- 1.5f Demonstrates an understanding of the effects of advances in knowledge.

Area 2: Assesses the athlete's abilities, problems and needs through appropriate history taking, interview and physical examination.

Element 2.1 Applies knowledge of the relevant clinical and biomedical sciences and the clinical reasoning process during assessment of the athlete.

- 2.1a Demonstrates a sound theoretical knowledge of normal anatomy, pathology, pathophysiology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, kinesiology, psychology and nutrition as the basis for assessment of the athlete.
- 2.1b Demonstrates sound knowledge of the clinical reasoning process in the context of all facets of Sports Physiotherapy practice.

Element 2.2 Collects history and supplementary data relevant to Sports Physiotherapy and the needs of the athlete.

- 2.2a Obtains current and past history of the presenting complaint from the sports participant and, when necessary and appropriate, the coach and other members of the sports health team.
- 2.2b Establishes the characteristics of the athlete's complaint including the location, nature and behaviour of the symptoms.
- 2.2c Reviews past and current medical and injury history and treatment.
- 2.2d Identifies symptom characteristics that may indicate serious pathology or disorders that may necessitate caution, contraindication or need for referral to an appropriate medical practitioner or other members of the sports health team.
- 2.2e Establishes whether diagnostic tests have been performed relevant to presenting complaint.
- 2.2f Establishes relevant current and past use of pharmacological agents by the athlete.
- 2.2g Formulates an appropriate physical examination plan based on the accurate interpretation of the relevant data collected during the history and interview process.
- 2.2h Modifies and orders the components of the physical examination plan with recognition and respect of the level of sporting involvement and ability, impact of the sporting environment, age, cultural background, severity and irritability of symptoms, associated conditions, and other relevant influences.

Element 2.3 Collects qualitative and quantitative data relevant to sports physiotherapy and the needs of the athlete.

- 2.3a Performs a systematic, efficient and prioritised physical examination appropriate to sports physiotherapy and the athlete's presenting problems, while accommodating any limitations imposed by the factors cited in 2.2h.
- 2.3b Demonstrates the ability to perform an accurate assessment of the neuro-musculo-skeletal system within the context of current sports physiotherapy practice.
- 2.3c Demonstrates examination skills pertinent to the practice of sports physiotherapy.
- 2.3d Reviews the available diagnostic tests relevant to the athlete's condition.
- 2.3e Recognises the risks and the safety precautions necessary in relation to Sports Physiotherapy assessment and selects or modifies the assessment procedures accordingly.
- 2.3f Demonstrates the ability to perform a comprehensive musculoskeletal screening examination appropriate to the athlete's sport.
- 2.3g Demonstrates the ability to perform examinations of sports related injuries in an on-field/ competitive (as opposed to clinical) environment.

Element 2.4 Makes justifiable decisions regarding a diagnosis reflecting current knowledge of neuromusculoskeletal pathophysiology relevant to sports physiotherapy

- 2.4a Identifies the primary cause of the athlete's presenting problems.
- 2.4b Identifies predisposing and contributing factors influencing the athlete's presenting problems.
- 2.4c Determines an athlete's prognosis following injury by applying knowledge of physiotherapy, medical and basic sciences, analysing the sports specific requirements of the athlete and applying or designing appropriate tests of performance.
- 2.4d Determines expected outcomes of intervention based on current scientific knowledge and contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practice.

Element 2.5 Demonstrates an understanding of clinical patterns encountered in sports physiotherapy practice

- 2.5a Demonstrates knowledge of aetiology, pathology, presenting symptoms and examination findings of common clinical patterns in the context of sports physiotherapy.

Element 2.6 Establishes the need for referral and further investigation of the athlete.

- 2.6a Refers the athlete to physiotherapy colleagues who have more expertise in the clinical management of the athlete's identified problem.
- 2.6b Refers the athlete to other relevant professional colleagues where the issues or problems identified are not appropriate for clinical physiotherapy management or require a multidisciplinary approach.

Element 2.7 Documents Sports Physiotherapy assessment findings accurately.

- 2.7a Documents all assessment findings accurately and consistently.
- 2.7b Documents provision of all relevant information and obtaining of athlete's consent according to current medicolegal requirements.

Element 2.8 Recognises the scope of sports physiotherapy assessment

- 2.8a Recognizes when further assessment by a physiotherapy colleague or a member of another professional discipline is required to assist in the diagnosis of the athlete's problem and the formulation of an appropriate management plan.

Area 3: Develops an appropriate sports physiotherapy clinical management plan based on interpretation of assessment findings

Element 3.1 Develops a logical rationale for the most appropriate physiotherapy management strategies to meet the athlete's needs.

- 3.1a Demonstrates that the clinical management plan has been developed with due consideration to the underlying pathophysiology and pathomechanics specific to the condition, the presenting clinical status of the athlete, and the identification of the relevant clinical indicators for the management plan.
- 3.1b Demonstrates that the developed clinical management plan has given due consideration to the athlete's level of sporting involvement and ability, age, cultural background, occupation, ability to communicate, and their expectations and beliefs.
- 3.1c Demonstrates a sound clinical reasoning ability in the analysis and interpretation of the clinical examination findings in order to justify the proposed management plan.
- 3.1d Identifies the indications, contraindications, risks and safety precautions relevant in the Sports Physiotherapy management of the athlete's condition, and is able to develop a management plan accordingly.

Element 3.2 Establishes short and long term goals relevant to the most appropriate Sports Physiotherapy management to meet the athlete's needs within the context of the sports model

- 3.2a Prioritises the clinical assessment findings in order to address the appropriate needs and expectations of the athlete, in the context of the underlying pathophysiology and pathomechanics of the athlete's condition.
- 3.2b Establishes realistic time frames and appropriate clinical indicators for the short and long-term goals taking into account the athlete's relevant past history, possible pain mechanisms, the recognised rates of healing for the underlying pathology, and any associated conditions, predisposing and causative factors.
- 3.2c Identifies appropriate time frames for each athlete's return to training and competition based on pathophysiology and pathomechanics of the athlete's condition.
- 3.2d Demonstrates an understanding of the influence of the athlete's level of sporting involvement and ability, age, cultural background, occupation, communication level and psychosocial factors on the goal-setting process.
- 3.2e Demonstrates an appropriate level of communication by involving the athlete, coach and other sports team members in the goal-setting process.
- 3.2f Plans appropriate goals encompassing relevant aspects of current scientific knowledge and contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practice.
- 3.2g Documents all short and long-term goals in an accurate and appropriate manner.

Element 3.3 Develops a clinical Sports Physiotherapy management plan based on current scientific knowledge and contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practices for the athlete's presenting condition.

- 3.3a Demonstrates a broad knowledge of appropriate Sports Physiotherapy skills and approaches to clinical management of sports related conditions.
- 3.3b Selects the most appropriate treatment intervention with respect to the level of sporting involvement and ability, age, cultural background, occupation, ability to communicate, and the expectations and beliefs of the athlete.
- 3.3c Selects the most appropriate treatment intervention with respect to the status of the underlying pathology, the presence of any contraindications or special precautions, and the anticipated response to intervention for the athlete's presenting condition.
- 3.3d Selects contemporary Sports Physiotherapy procedures, which reflect current biomedical and scientific knowledge and established physiotherapy professional practice, for the management of the athlete's presenting condition.
- 3.3e Understands the factors that influence the effectiveness of Sports Physiotherapy clinical management including the athlete's level of sporting involvement and ability, age, cultural background, occupation, ability to communicate, and the expectations and beliefs of the athlete.

Element 3.4 Incorporates relevant evaluation procedures within the Sports Physiotherapy management plan.

- 3.4a Selects the most appropriate evaluation tools for the athlete's presenting condition, based on the reported reliability and validity of recognised outcome measurements, in the context of the interpretation and analysis of relevant assessment data.
- 3.4b Understands the need for continual evaluation of all facets of the athlete's presenting condition during all phases of the implementation of the Sports Physiotherapy management plan.
- 3.4c Recognises the limitations of current scientific knowledge and contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practices in the management of the athlete's condition, and considers these in the expected outcomes of the evaluation process.
- 3.4d Applies appropriate clinical reasoning to relate the evaluation procedures to the goals of management and the expected outcomes based on recorded contemporary sports physiotherapy practice.
- 3.4e Demonstrates effective and appropriate communication skills in the planning and implementation of the evaluation process.

Area 4: Implements and evaluates the effectiveness of a Sports Physiotherapy clinical management plan.

Element 4.1 Ensures the safe and effective implementation of appropriate Sports Physiotherapy clinical management at an advanced level.

- 4.1a Demonstrates a high level of expertise including safe handling when delivering a wide range of basic and advanced Sports Physiotherapy techniques.
- 4.1b Performs a technique with precision and accuracy with respect to the selected site of application.
- 4.1c Discusses the proposed treatment intervention with the athlete, including the expected outcomes that may result from the intervention, and the presence of any relevant risks that may subsequently arise.
- 4.1d Gains informed consent from the athlete prior to implementation of the proposed treatment intervention.
- 4.1e Seeks appropriate athlete feedback whilst the technique is being applied.
- 4.1f Able to modify intervention during the treatment session in response to feedback from the athlete and evaluation of the intervention.
- 4.1g Provides appropriate advice to the sporting client regarding activity levels within the confines of the pathomechanics and pathophysiology of the injury/condition, particularly in terms of training and competition commitments.
- 4.1h Makes appropriate recommendations regarding modifications to training and equipment.
- 4.1i Develops a program of alternative activities specific to the athlete's needs.
- 4.1j Demonstrates appropriate documentation of obtaining informed consent from the athlete, and of the specific treatment interventions and management strategies employed and feedback given by the athlete during treatment.

Element 4.2 Effectively evaluates the results of Sports Physiotherapy clinical management.

- 4.2a Selects the most appropriate evaluation tools relevant to the athlete's level of sporting involvement and ability, condition, and the status of the underlying pathology, as well as the age, expectations and beliefs of the athlete.
- 4.2b Demonstrates expertise in using the appropriate outcome measurement tools and clinical skills to evaluate the immediate and latent effects of the specific Sports Physiotherapy intervention.

- 4.2c Applies appropriate clinical reasoning in the collection of data to measure the effects of the Sports Physiotherapy intervention, in order to evaluate the effects against the expected outcomes based on recorded contemporary sports physiotherapy practice.
- 4.2d Applies effective clinical reasoning skills in evaluating the progress of the athlete's condition in response to the Sports Physiotherapy intervention by comparing the measured effects to the predicted clinical pathway, clinical indicators and the determined short and long-term goals.
- 4.2e Demonstrates effective and appropriate communication skills in the collection of data pertaining to the outcome of the Sports Physiotherapy intervention.

Element 4.3 Makes appropriate judgments of the effectiveness of Sports Physiotherapy clinical management

- 4.3a Identifies and collates the most appropriate clinical data to support a comprehensive evaluation process.
- 4.3b Applies sound clinical reasoning in the interpretation of the outcome of the Sports Physiotherapy clinical management in the context of the goal setting process, the pathophysiology of the athlete's condition, and the expected outcomes based on recorded contemporary sports physiotherapy practice.
- 4.3c Recognises the potential limitations of the effectiveness and scope of the current Sports Physiotherapy clinical management plan with respect to the predicted clinical pathway, clinical indicators and the determined short and long-term goals.
- 4.3d Understands the potential influences of the athlete's level of sporting involvement and ability, age, cultural background, pain mechanisms, associated condition and clinical status of the athlete in the effectiveness of the implemented Sports Physiotherapy clinical management program.
- 4.3e Understands the potential influences of predisposing and contributing factors in the effectiveness of the implemented Sports Physiotherapy clinical management program.

Element 4.4 Makes appropriate modifications to Sports Physiotherapy clinical management, in response to the evaluation process.

- 4.4a Recognises the factors that are influencing the effectiveness of the Sports Physiotherapy clinical management program, and modifies these factors to optimise the outcome of the intervention whilst not compromising the safety of the athlete.
- 4.4b Demonstrates adequate and appropriate communication skills to discuss with the athlete any proposed modification to the Sports Physiotherapy clinical management plan, and the expected outcome that will result from this change.
- 4.4c Adequately and safely implements changes in the Sports Physiotherapy management program with consideration for the current pathological state of the athlete's condition, the athlete's beliefs and culture, the previously determined short and

long-term goals, and the presence of any contraindications risks or special precautions to these proposed changes in management.

- 4.4d Demonstrates that the choice of the treatment intervention modification reflects current scientific and biomedical knowledge and encompasses recorded contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practices.
- 4.4e Applies adequate clinical reasoning skills to determine when the evaluation should be implemented, the most important factors to be evaluated, and the degree of variation from the expected outcomes that is unacceptable.
- 4.4f Accurately and legibly documents modifications to Sports Physiotherapy management and treatment.
- 4.4g Recognises the need for appropriate referral to other professionals when the degree of variation from the expected outcomes is unacceptable or for further evaluation of the athlete's condition.

Area 5: Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with the athlete, members of the sports health team and other personnel within the sports model, including professional peers.

Element 5.1 Communicates effectively with the athlete and the sports health team.

- 5.1a Demonstrates advanced effective and flexible communication skills during the interview and physical examination to obtain information communicated verbally or non-verbally by the athlete.
- 5.1b Provides the athlete with appropriate and adequate information in relation to physiotherapy diagnosis, treatment plan and expected outcome.
- 5.1c Demonstrates the ability to discuss relevant aspects of athlete management with sports physicians and other sports physiotherapists.
- 5.1d Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with athletes, coaches and other health professionals.
- 5.1e Demonstrates an ability to provide appropriate verbal and written feedback to the athlete and coach regarding significant findings and recommendations following musculoskeletal screening of the athlete.

Element 5.2 Demonstrates tact and sensitivity when communicating with the athlete.

- 5.2a Creates an atmosphere which allows good rapport with the athlete.
- 5.2b Creates and maintains conditions for effective communication including active listening and opportunity for questions.
- 5.2c Demonstrates sensitivity to feelings and responses communicated both verbally and non verbally.
- 5.2d Demonstrates an understanding of barriers to communication and strategies to overcome these.

Element 5.3 Responds professionally to information conveyed by the athlete.

- 5.3a Maintains confidentiality with respect to information conveyed by the athlete at all times.
- 5.3b Maintains a professional therapist-athlete relationship at all times.
- 5.3c Communicates appropriate information to other professionals after gaining consent from the athlete.

Element 5.4 Appraises literature and presents relevant information effectively to groups of people such as professional peers, sports team personnel and the wider community.

- 5.4a Demonstrates the ability to resource and review relevant scientific and biomedical literature and recorded contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practices.
- 5.4b Demonstrates the ability to synthesise information from the review of relevant scientific and biomedical literature and recorded contemporary Sports Physiotherapy practices and present pertinent facts in appropriate formats to other physiotherapists, other health professionals and the wider community.

Area 6: Documents and reports on sports physiotherapy clinical management and other activities relevant to the practice of sports physiotherapy in a timely and appropriate manner.

Element 6.1 Prepares reports on physiotherapy management and other activities relevant to the practice of sports physiotherapy within appropriate timeframes.

- 6.1a Documents all aspects of assessment and management according to the guidelines of the workplace.
- 6.1b Prepares physiotherapy reports in written form according to accepted protocols.
- 6.1c Utilises different report writing styles according to the circumstances and documents in an accurate, clear and concise manner.

Element 6.2 Recognises the importance of clearly documenting details of sports physiotherapy assessment and intervention and other activities relevant to the practice of sports physiotherapy within appropriate timeframes

- 6.2a Accurately documents assessment instruments and procedures used during physiotherapy assessment and intervention.
- 6.2b Records significant changes in athlete status during assessment and intervention.
- 6.2c Dates and signs all documentation.
- 6.2d Documents significant contraindications to physiotherapy intervention.
- 6.2e Provides a documented management plan which is goal oriented and outcome-based.
- 6.2f Retains copies of documentation as required by the facility.

Element 6.3: Demonstrates appropriate knowledge of relevant medico-legal requirements when preparing documentation.

- 6.2a Complies with the confidentiality requirements of the Australian Physiotherapy Association's Ethical Principles and the Australian Physiotherapy Competency Standards 1994.
- 6.2b Complies with the Privacy and Consent legislation when providing information to other service providers.
- 6.2c Accesses appropriate medico-legal information as required by the workplace.
- 6.2d Gains informed consent where appropriate and shows an awareness of the implications.

AREA 7: DEMONSTRATES PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR APPROPRIATE TO SPORTS PHYSIOTHERAPY
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Element 7.1 Demonstrates a commitment to optimal athlete management.

- 7.1a. Demonstrates a caring attitude and concern for the athlete's welfare.
- 7.1b. Demonstrates knowledge and application of contemporary Sports Physiotherapy and related areas, including relevant biomedical knowledge.
- 7.1c. Recognises personal and professional strengths and limitations, implements appropriate actions accordingly and acknowledges the abilities and roles of others.

Element 7.2 Demonstrates a commitment to excellence in Sports Physiotherapy.

- 7.2a. Demonstrates intellectual curiosity, a commitment to professional development and the ability to adapt to advances in knowledge and to apply learning to the workplace.
- 7.2b. Demonstrates a commitment to promoting fitness and health within the context of sports and physical recreation.

Element 7.3 Is committed to ethical practice for the Sports Physiotherapist and acts in accordance with legal requirements at all times.

- 7.3a. Understands and complies with Australian Physiotherapy Association Code of Conduct.
- 7.3b. Demonstrates and applies knowledge of the current medico-legal requirements relating to Sports Physiotherapy practice.

Element 7.4 Applies informed judgment and current scientific principles to sports physiotherapy practice.

- 7.4a. Seeks evidence and appraises research relevant to sports physiotherapy practice.
- 7.4b. Demonstrates an ability to acquire relevant knowledge and to apply learning to sports physiotherapy practice.
- 7.4c. Demonstrates an ability to adapt to advances in Sports Physiotherapy and related areas, including relevant biomedical knowledge.

Element 7.5 Demonstrates an awareness of principles for safe practice and the relevance of workload issues in sports physiotherapy

- 7.5a. Applies preventive strategies such as varying the physical demands of work, limiting the number of patients treated per day, scheduling rest breaks, use of height adjustable work surfaces and ergonomic set up of other equipment.

7.5b Recognises the importance of identification of transferable skills, adequate income protection insurance and career planning in sports physiotherapy.

Area 8 Recognises the role of a Sports Physiotherapist as a service provider within the health care system.

Element 8.1 Demonstrates awareness of the role of Sports Physiotherapy in the current health system and relevant related systems and services.

- 8.1a Recognises the need to gain knowledge of the implications of any national health strategies or directives for Sports Physiotherapy practice.
- 8.1b Understands the role of the Sports Physiotherapist within the current medical, occupational health and educational models of service delivery and within the local community.
- 8.1c Works with other service providers to access relevant community, health and related services according to needs identified with the patient.
- 8.1d Demonstrates professional accountability when providing service within the framework of the current health care system.

Element 8.2 Understands the central role of working with sports participants in the practice of sports physiotherapy.

- 8.2a Recognises and respects the priorities of athletes with respect to training and competition.
- 8.2b Demonstrates the ability to be flexible and adaptable in physiotherapy assessment and intervention strategies to accommodate priorities with respect to training and competition in a sports team environment.
- 8.2c Recognises and respects the extrinsic and intrinsic pressures that are placed on athletes.

Appendix

Explanation of Areas of Competency in Sports Physiotherapy

Area 1: Sports Specific Approach

Sports Physiotherapy includes assessment and treatment of sports participants in a clinical setting as well as during on-field training and competition. Sports physiotherapists often work with other professions to form a Sports Health Team. The Sports Health team may include a sports physician, an orthopaedic surgeon, a sports dietician, a sport psychologist, a podiatrist, a massage therapist, a biomechanist, a sports scientist, a strength and conditioning coach and other allied sports professionals. Sports physiotherapists usually apply their skills within a Sports Model. The Sports Model recognises the integral relationships and consultation between the sports health team and the sports coach, sports team members and sports team management staff. Sports physiotherapists are often required to travel with sports participants who are training and competing at interstate and overseas venues.

Area 2: Assessment

A Sports Physiotherapy assessment includes collection of quantitative and qualitative data from the athlete and an analysis of the data to formulate a Sports Physiotherapy diagnosis and management plan for the athlete's condition.

A sound theoretical knowledge of normal anatomy, pathology, pathophysiology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, kinesiology, psychology and nutrition provides the basis for an assessment of the athlete by a Sports Physiotherapist. A Sports Physiotherapist must make an informed decision whether Sports Physiotherapy intervention is appropriate. Assessment is a continual process throughout the management of the athlete. Assessment processes include sports appropriate musculoskeletal screening of the athlete, on-field/competition assessment of injuries and clinical examination of the athlete.

A Sports Physiotherapist identifies the athlete's level of sporting involvement, functional ability, problems, needs and expectations from the information gained in the assessment. A Sports Physiotherapy diagnosis, prognosis, and expected outcome of intervention are determined based on relevant assessment findings and consideration of other influences.

Area 3: Interpretation and Management Plan

A Sports Physiotherapist has an advanced knowledge of Sports Physiotherapy and musculoskeletal medicine and is able to apply this knowledge to clinical practice in the design of prevention and rehabilitation programs.

Area 4: Sports Physiotherapy Management and Intervention Skills

A Sports Physiotherapist has an advanced knowledge of Sports Physiotherapy and musculoskeletal medicine and is able to apply this knowledge to clinical practice in the implementation and evaluation of prevention and rehabilitation programs. The evaluation

includes a comparison of measured outcomes to expected outcomes following physiotherapy intervention.

Area 5:Communication

A Sports Physiotherapist requires advanced communication skills to gain a full appreciation of the athlete's needs, expectations and beliefs and how they are likely to impact on the assessment and management of the athlete. The Sports Physiotherapist must be able to communicate effectively with the athlete, members of the sports health team and personnel within the sports model to provide optimal care.

Area 6:Documentation

Documentation shall be appropriately prepared according to the appropriate protocols, taking into consideration medico-legal requirements for the practice of Sports Physiotherapy.

Protocols include those of the facility, compensible body or other requesting party.

Area 7:Professional, Legal and Ethical Approach

Professional behaviour encompasses a commitment to optimal athlete management, support of and participation in the practice of Sports Physiotherapy and ethical principles and legal requirements. A sports physiotherapist must be cognizant of the inherent dangers in terms of physical injury during sports physiotherapy practice and implement strategies to prevent injury and deal with injury if it occurs.

Area 8:Role as a Service Provider

An effective accountable service provider within the health care system has a knowledge of the role of Sports Physiotherapy within the physiotherapy profession and its relationship to the health care system and other related systems.