

Physiotherapy Education Programs in Germany

I. Basic education program

The 3-years physiotherapy education (4500 hours) takes place at physiotherapy schools which are at a Polytechnic level. The theoretical and practical/technical education is provided at school, the clinical education is provided at affiliated hospitals or in other clinical settings. All PT-students must pass a state examination (Staatliche Prüfung) once the program is completed. Students receive then the following certificates:

- Completion certificate of the Physiotherapy school (Zeugnis or Abschlusszeugnis)
- The granting of licence from the state which allows to bear the professional title „physiotherapist“ and to practice the profession, e.g. to work at hospitals, in private clinics, as private practitioner, in workplace health promotion and prevention, in sports centres and rehabilitation centres or as teachers at physiotherapy schools, but most time further education at academic or non-academic level and extended practical experience is required for teachers.

Entry requirements

The minimum admission requirement for physiotherapy programs is completion of ten years of secondary level schooling („Realschule“). Additionally, applicants to physiotherapy programs must be physically and mentally healthy and do not have a record of conduct that would disqualify them from practising physiotherapy.

Status of the educational institute

There are around 250 schools of physiotherapy in Germany. Some of them are affiliated to university hospitals.



Aim

The aim of the physiotherapy course is to qualify the students at the completion of their studies to work independently as physiotherapists in all fields of physiotherapy. The legal protection of the title „physiotherapist“ has been established in Germany, the professional activity is widely protected by contracts with the health insurances.

Mission

Physiotherapy is a scientific health discipline, dealing with the promotion of health, prophylactic measures, treatment and rehabilitation of clients. Physiotherapy covers the knowledge concerning the movement and functional skills of human beings in combination with the bio-psycho-social model of interaction.

Objectives

The objective of the programme is to provide the student with a profound knowledge of the structure and function of the body, as well as with the awareness of psychological and social aspects of health and interaction of human beings with their surroundings.

Core content

The main emphasis is on the subjects of physiotherapy: the movement therapy and the physical therapy.

The design of the curriculum must be based (by federal law) on the following areas/subjects

Knowledge of professional and legal issues
Anatomy, Physiology
Pathology, Hygiene, First Aid and Bandaging
Applied physics and biomechanics
Psychology, Paedagogics, Sociology
Prevention and rehabilitation
Theory of training and retraining
Theory of movement and mobility
Physical education
Physiotherapeutic examination techniques
Physiotherapy treatment techniques
Massage Treatment
Electrotherapy
Hydro-, balneo-, thermo- and inhalation therapy
Methodical application of physiotherapy in the clinical fields
Practical application of physiotherapy on patients

II. University program

Bachelor program

Since 2001 there exist a growing number of PT-schools linking up with Universities of Applied Science in order to upgrade the physiotherapy basic education program to a Bachelor degree (see list in www.zvk.org).

The entry requirement is the successful completion of the basic educational program and the legal qualification to study at university (at least 12 years of secondary school – „Abitur“).

Besides that also two parallel-programs combining basic and university education has been established.

Master program

Some Universities set up (or will set up in near future) master programs in physiotherapy.

Entry requirements: Physiotherapists who upgraded to Bachelor's level.

Core content

The university-programs in physiotherapy are focusing to acquire scientific (evidence based practice, research) and methodological as well as other core competencies, e.g. bio-psycho-social and client-centred thinking. The aim is to upgrade the student to an extended reflective professional practitioner (Bachelor) or a specialist in a certain field of activity, e.g. research (Master).

Further information

www.zvk.org, www.physio-europe.org