



The ACPIVR Education Strategy

Acknowledgements

The ACPIVR Education Strategy has been developed by the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists Interested in Vestibular Rehabilitation (ACPIVR) Education Sub Committee

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Position Statement

Vestibular and Balance System health care is a scientific and valid approach for the assessment, treatment and management of dizziness and balance dysfunction originating centrally and/ or peripherally and can be applied to clinical practice across all specialisms within health care.

The ACPIVR aim to facilitate learning and Continued Professional Development (CPD) for Physiotherapists working in Vestibular and Balance System (VBS) health care and to recognise the stage of development and level of practice in relation to the ACPIVR Competency Framework for Physiotherapists working in VBS health care (ACPIVR, 2023).

Background

The need for a more structured approach to the development of knowledge, understanding and skills for physiotherapists within VBS health care has been highlighted both nationally and internationally by professionals, educators and service providers (Cohen et al., 2011; Male et al., 2019; Meldrum et al., 2020, van de Berg et al., 2022).

Changes in the law and an evolving scope of practice for Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) in the United Kingdom (UK) have driven competency framework documents for Musculoskeletal Physiotherapists (IFOMPT, 2016) and include Non-medical Prescribing (Royal Pharmaceutical Society 2016, 2020), Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs) (Health Education England, 2017), First point of Contact Practitioners (FCPs) (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists, 2019; Health Education England [HEE], 2020), Advanced Practice Practitioners (Tawiah et al., 2024) and the Roadmap to Practice (HEE, 2020).

The ACPIVR aim to promote professional development of Physiotherapists which can be applied to the four pillars of Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP): Clinical, Leadership and management, Research and Education within VBS health care. The ACPIVR have developed a competency framework for Physiotherapists working in VBS health care to underpin practice (ACPIVR, 2023). The framework recognises the development of knowledge and skills and the many ways in which professional development evolves over time and how such learning can be recognised via a portfolio and/or within Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). The formation of the Centre for Advancing Practice and professional register for Musculoskeletal Physiotherapists in primary care identifies a route for gaining recognition for development of advanced practice. The ACPIVR believe VBS health care is a 'golden thread' running through all specialities and underpins development of Advanced Practice. The knowledge, skills and attributes identified in the ACPIVR Competency Framework for Physiotherapists working in VBS health care will support Physiotherapists working in all specialisms at all levels from pre-registration and newly qualified through to ACP and consultant practitioners.

Education opportunities in Vestibular and Balance System Healthcare

Current education opportunities in VBS health care occur locally, nationally and internationally. Development of knowledge and skills happen via many formats, for example:

- Local, national and international expertise
- Special interest groups locally, nationally and internationally
- Independent learning
- Private courses
- Independently driven development of knowledge and skills in this area
- Development of a professional portfolio
- Independent study of master's modules (non-specific)

- Focused post-graduate study, for example post-graduate Certificates, Diplomas, Masters, MPhil, Doctorate and post-Doctoral levels of study and research
- Local, national and international courses (in person or online)

The ACPIVR Education Aims

To assist Physiotherapists in their development of knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes across the four pillars of ACP and as recommended in the ACPIVR Competency Framework for Physiotherapists working in VBS health care (ACPIVR, 2023) the ACPIVR will:

- Offer non-accredited weekend/ day / short courses, Annual General Meetings, conferences, online and face to face regional, national and international courses.
- Collaborate with regional support groups and private course providers if requested to develop programmes aligned with the ACPIVR Framework.
- Engage with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP), HEIs and other Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to promote undergraduate Physiotherapy course content in line with the Framework of Core Capabilities for Physiotherapists working in VBS health care (ACPIVR, 2023)
- Work with HEIs to develop short courses and MSc modules in VBS health care which can contribute towards fulfilment of the ACPIVR framework (stages pre-registration 1-3) and potentially achieve M level accreditation. These modules can form part of a Physiotherapists post-graduate award or work towards ACP qualifications.
- Work to develop a portfolio route in conjunction with HEIs to achieve up to and including stage 3.
- Support students (on placement and in HEIs) and qualified physiotherapists by providing mentorship and support for the achievement of pre-registration and stage 1-3 of the ACPIVR competency framework and those wishing to seek ACP status.
- Explore potential for an ACPIVR accredited award.

Summary

1. The ACPIVR recognise the need for specific and standardised training in VBS health care for Physiotherapists and have developed an ACPIVR Competency Framework for Physiotherapists working in VBS health care and an education strategy to address this need.
2. The ACPIVR Competency Framework for Physiotherapists working in VBS health care outlines the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes recommended for all levels of physiotherapists working in VBS health care and is compatible with the four pillars of ACP.

The ACPIVR will work collaboratively to implement the ACPIVR Educational Strategy and provide leadership, support, and assistance in developing a wide range of educational, academic and professional learning opportunities. This will enable physiotherapists to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes in VBS health care via informal, formal and accredited HEI routes.

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