AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Specialisation Training Program

Program Learning Outcomes and Intended Learning Outcomes for Milestone 4 (Expert) Practice

The Program Learning Outcomes provide the overarching outcomes for the Specialisation Training Program (STP) and describe what registrars are expected to demonstrate on completion. They are aligned with the intended learning outcomes for the seven roles of the APA Physiotherapy Competence Framework and reflect the capabilities expected of physiotherapists practising at Milestone 4 (Expert) level. Together, they emphasise specialist practice as an integration of expert clinical care, communication, collaboration, leadership, scholarship, advocacy and professionalism.

AUSTRALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

Program Learning Outcomes for Refreshed STP

The Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) provide the overarching outcomes for the Specialisation Training Program (STP) and describe what registrars are expected to demonstrate on completion. They are aligned with the seven roles of the APA Physiotherapy Competence Framework Version 7.1 and reflect the capabilities expected of physiotherapists practising at Milestone 4 (Expert) level. Together, they emphasise specialist practice as an integration of expert clinical care, communication, collaboration, leadership, scholarship, advocacy and professionalism.

1. Provide evidence-informed, culturally responsive, client-centred, effective and efficient interventions and management for the most complex presentations through advanced assessment and clinical reasoning.
2. Lead quality-improvement and risk-management initiatives that enhance safety, quality of care and health outcomes for clients and practitioners.
3. Model and enable effective and ethical communication practice with clients and relevant others to establish therapeutic alliances, facilitate shared understanding and informed decision-making, and support safe, high-quality care.
4. Lead and optimise collaboration with clients, colleagues and other stakeholders to deliver safe, coordinated and high-quality care.
5. Demonstrate leadership that enables service improvement, sustainable resource stewardship and evidence-informed change at team, organisational and systems levels.
6. Advocate for improvements in health outcomes by addressing determinants of health, enabling equitable access to services and resources, and influencing practice, organisational and system-level change in partnership with clients, communities and populations.
7. Critically appraise, apply and translate evidence, and engage in ongoing learning to support evidence-informed practice, quality improvement and service development. Design, deliver, evaluate and improve educational activities or experiences for clients, learners, professionals and other relevant stakeholders to support learning, capability and improved outcomes.
8. Conduct scholarly inquiry by formulating relevant questions, using appropriate research methods, interpreting and communicating findings, and translating knowledge to advance practice.
9. Demonstrate professional integrity, ethical practice and accountability to clients, communities and the profession, while contributing to professional standards, governance and workforce wellbeing.
10. Critically evaluate and apply health informatics, digital technologies and artificial intelligence using ethical and evidence-based approaches to promote quality, safety, and equity in healthcare delivery and professional practice.
11. Advance inclusive, equitable and culturally responsive professional practice and healthcare by critically reflecting on personal, professional and systemic influences on care, and engaging respectfully and collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and diverse communities.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for Each Role, Cultural Safety, and AI & Digital Literacy

The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each Role were developed using principles of constructive alignment and authentic assessment. The ILOs integrate the Key Competencies, Enabling Competencies and Milestone 4 descriptors of the APA Competence Framework (v7.1) into assessable outcomes that reflect expert professional practice. The ILOs are designed to focus on demonstrable performance, impact, professional judgement, leadership, and sustained achievement over time. They support candidates to present authentic evidence from diverse practice settings while enabling assessors to evaluate achievement of the competencies required for expert-level physiotherapy practice and progression towards specialist recognition.

Physiotherapy Practitioner Role

1. Demonstrate expert, culturally responsive and client-centred physiotherapy practice, integrating breadth of knowledge to address a variety and complexity of presentations in their area of practice.
2. Effectively prioritise competing professional demands.
3. Assess complex, challenging and unusual presentations, efficiently identifying and prioritising client issues and adapting assessment and investigation strategies in response to clinical findings.
4. Synthesise assessment findings, investigations and contextual information using expert clinical reasoning to inform diagnosis, prognosis, prevention and management of complex presentations.
5. Establish and prioritise health management goals collaboratively with clients, integrating their needs, values, preferences and expectations with clinical requirements and available resources.
6. Develop and implement evidence-informed, client-centred management plans for complex presentations, selecting appropriate interventions and incorporating ongoing management, referral and discharge.
7. Perform and model evidence-informed physiotherapy interventions skilfully and safely, monitoring outcomes and adapting intervention in response to changing or unanticipated clinical circumstances.
8. Lead continuous improvement in health promotion and client care through risk management and the design, implementation and evaluation of quality-improvement strategies.

Communicator Role

1. Establish and sustain effective therapeutic alliances through culturally responsive and client-centred communication and effectively managing challenging interactions.
2. Model expert client-centred communication to ethically and efficiently elicit, integrate and synthesise accurate and relevant information.
3. Lead communication practices that enable effective information exchange, shared understanding and informed decision-making with clients, carers, colleagues and other relevant stakeholders to support safe, coordinated and high-quality care.
4. Document and share written, electronic and digital health information to support effective care while meeting legal, ethical and professional requirements.

Collaborator Role

1. Lead and optimise interprofessional collaboration to address complex clinical challenges and improve client outcomes.
2. Build and sustain effective collaborative relationships through expert consultation, negotiation, shared decision making and conflict resolution.
3. Lead and optimise referral, delegation and transitions of care for complex presentations to support safe, coordinated management.
4. Develop collaborative capability in others through mentoring, role modelling and facilitation of effective collaborative practice.

Leader Role

1. Lead improvements in quality of care and client safety through the strategic use of health informatics, technology and service-delivery data.
2. Optimise resource stewardship and cost-effective service delivery through the application of evidence, evaluation of service utilisation patterns, and implementation of models of care that enhance client outcomes and system sustainability.
3. Demonstrate leadership that enables complex organisational, system and practice-level change through enhancing team performance, mentoring others to develop leadership capability, and reflecting on the impact of personal leadership.
4. Lead service improvement and sustainable change through developing and communicating a clear vision, using evidence and data to evaluate outcomes, and disseminating learnings to support continuous improvement.

Health Advocate Role

1. Lead and model effective advocacy with and for clients with complex needs to address determinants of health and facilitate timely access to appropriate health services and resources.
2. Lead and model strategies that enable clients with complex needs to adopt healthy behaviours, including influencing organisations to create supportive opportunities and environments for behaviour change.
3. Lead illness and injury prevention, health promotion and health surveillance activities through continuous quality improvement that strengthens practice and health outcomes.
4. Partner with groups, communities and populations to identify health needs and determinants, and lead advocacy for organisational, system and policy change through service design that improves health outcomes.

Scholar Role

1. Model lifelong learning and continuous professional development through reflective practice, performance evaluation and mentorship that strengthens individual and collective practice.
2. Provide educational leadership through teaching, supervision and evaluation that promotes learner development, client safety and positive learning cultures.
3. Lead evidence-informed practice through the critical appraisal, integration and application of evidence to improve decision-making and professional practice.

4. Advance scholarly inquiry and knowledge translation through ethical research, dissemination of findings and engagement with stakeholders to inform practice, education and policy.

Professional Role

1. Model and promote integrity and accountability in professional practice, communication, relationships and resolution of ethical issues.
2. Influence the profession's accountability to clients, communities and society through responsible stewardship of resources and promotion of the public good.
3. Lead and contribute to the advancement of professional governance and standards by informing policy, implementing changes to improve standards and compliance, and responding to unprofessional and unethical conduct.
4. Promote sustainable professional practice and a culture of care by modelling and implementing processes that effectively support well-being and careers of self and colleagues.

Health Informatics, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Literacy

Critically evaluate and apply health informatics, digital technologies and artificial intelligence using ethical and evidence-based approaches to promote quality, safety, and equity in healthcare delivery and professional practice.

Cultural Safety

Advance inclusive, equitable and culturally responsive professional practice and healthcare by critically reflecting on personal, professional and systemic influences on care, and engaging respectfully and collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and diverse communities.

Version Control and Document Review

Version	Contributor	Notes	Approvals
1.0	Wendy Nickson	Initial PLOs drafting	Endorsed in principle College Council Nov 2024
2.0	Harsh Suri Louisa Remedios Ellen Webber	ILOs developed and PLOs revised to constructively align with the APA Physiotherapy Competence Framework and recommendations for refreshed STP approved by the College Council in July 2026	Approved by the College Council, 10 Nov 2026