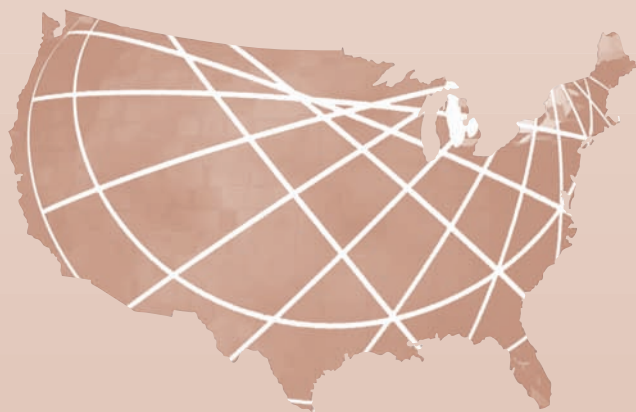


Use of the Coursework Evaluation Tool: Moving Toward the Standardization of Foreign Educational Equivalency



The years 2005–2006 have shown the greatest movement toward adoption of a single educational standard for foreign educated physical therapists moving between jurisdictions. The Federation's *Coursework Evaluation Tool for Foreign Educated Physical Therapists* © 2004 FSBPT is required by 21 jurisdictions. An additional 29 jurisdictions accept reports in the format of the CWT but do not require its use. When more than half of US jurisdictions require the use of the CWT 4th Edition, the Federation will approach U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS—formerly INS) to adopt it as a predictor tool for immigration purposes.

Four Retro Tools were developed to reflect previous US educational standards for physical therapists. They were validated in a study completed in 2005 by the Federation in cooperation with the Foreign Credentialing Commission on Physical Therapy. In fall 2005, the FSBPT Delegate Assembly voted to recommend the use of the Retro Tools for the evaluation of foreign educated physical therapists that reflect the US educational standards at the time of graduation.

Five credentialing review agencies have purchased a license to use the CWT 4th Edition and have undergone training in the philosophy and guidelines for the interpretation of the tool. These include the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools for the International Consultants of Delaware (ICD); Foreign Credentialing Commission on Physical Therapy (FCCPT), International Credentialing Associates, Inc. (ICA); International Educational Research Foundation (IERF) and the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to use of the CWT 4th Edition, the agencies also have access to the use of the Retro Tools.

The adoption and/or requirement of the use of the tools by the jurisdictions have been a slow but steady progression. North Carolina already had regulations that required the use of whatever tool reflected the year of first US licensure or the year of graduation if the applicant was not yet licensed in the US. Texas has adopted the use of the tool that reflects the year of graduation for applicants who graduated prior to the current CAPTE standards. Kentucky and New Hampshire have also accepted reports using the tool for candidates for licensure by endorsement.

FCCPT continues to use only the CWT 4th Edition to meet federal requirement for an immigrant entering the US for the first time. Thus, candidates who apply for the Comprehensive Credentials Evaluation (Type I Certificate) for immigration and licensure purposes will be evaluated according to the current US standards.

If they also apply to a state that will accept the Retro Tools for year of graduation, when their report is completed for

immigration, it can be converted to the earlier standard. This means a person may not be eligible for the “Health Care Worker Certification” for visa purposes, but would be eligible for licensure in a jurisdiction if they are capable of passing the National Physical Therapy Examination.

When considering regulations language to accept all of the tools, jurisdictions may wish to consider broad language such as “the current CWT 4th Edition and any future editions or the tool which reflects the time of the applicant’s graduation.” This gives the applicant greater access to sit for the NPTE and eventual licensure. Wording the regulations to reflect either the current tool or the retro tool linked to year of graduation will decrease the cost to the applicant as conversion from the current tool to a retro tool involves an additional fee. This language also opens doors for the already-licensed foreign educated physical therapists who request licensure by endorsement. The final testing ground remains the passing of the NPTE.

The following table lists those states that currently require the use of the CWT 4th Edition. In order keep this information up-to-date, please notify Christine Larson, Director of Professional Standards, when you make changes in your regulations related to the adoption of the FSBPT CWT 4th Edition and/or the Retro Tools. ■

States That Require Use of the CWT	Comments
AZ	
AR	
CO	
DC	Requires a Type I Certificate from FCCPT
FL	
HI	Recognizes credentialing organizations that utilize the FSBPT CWT
KY	
LA	Requires a Type I Certificate from FCCPT
MD	
MA	Requires a Type I Certificate from FCCPT
MN	Requires a Type I Certificate from FCCPT
NC	
ND	Requires a Type I Certificate from FCCPT
OR	
RI	Endorsement with FCCPT credentials
SC	
TN	Requires a Type I Certificate from FCCPT
TX	
WA	
WV	
WY	

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Florida. The database has proven to be especially useful for Florida because FSBPT automatically sends an alert to all jurisdictions known to license an individual when a jurisdiction reports a disciplinary action taken against that individual. Florida also has a requirement that limits the number of times an exam can be taken and the score report provides this information.

Florida has found that the database is also a great method for checking the accuracy of an application for licensure by endorsement. An application that does not list disciplinary action or the correct number of times the exam has been taken is, as you might expect, an immediate cause for concern. Score transfer reports automatically list the applicant’s exam dates and reported disciplinary actions in their record.

Traditionalists, I believe, always had an underlying fear that the Federation wanted to take over licensure for all the boards. The reality is that we are the Federation. The Oregon

board has had no problems supporting this effort. California has also been supportive of a national database. The recent hurricanes and other natural disasters underline the fact that if all 53 jurisdictions were in the database, there would be no concerns about unavailable information. It means less time for the state to process the application. The state is happier. The applicant is working sooner. It is just a benefit to everyone.

Once again, it should be stressed that providing any data to the Federation is helpful. The Federation can provide the status of every licensee in a state if the state would then update the data and return it. If you cannot provide an entire date of birth, could you provide the month and year? If you cannot provide an entire social security number, is there anything to preclude you from providing the last four digits? If you cannot give a complete street address, can you offer the city, state and zip code? Any piece of information is better than none. ■