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GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONALLY-TRAINED APPLICANTS WHO WISH TO PRACTISE PHYSIOTHERAPY IN QUEBEC



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
PHYSIOTHERAPY	
The profession	4
The professionals.....	4
The employment situation	5
PROCEDURES FOR ISSUANCE OF LICENSES BY THE OPPQ	
For Canadian graduates	5
For international graduates	5
EQUIVALENCE PROCESS	
Opening a file.....	6
Admissions Committee	6
Results of the equivalence process	6
Skills assessment	6
Executive Committee	
.....	6
Initial registration.....	7
Review.....	7
OFFICE QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE.....	7
CONCLUSION.....	8

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: *Table of fees payable and Steps in the equivalence process*

Appendix 2: *Checklist for equivalence application file*

Appendix 3: *References*

Appendix 4: Regulation respecting the legal authorizations to practise the profession of physical therapist outside Québec which give access to the physical therapist's permit issued by the Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec – *Professional Code (R.S.Q., c. C-26, s. 94, par. q)* [click here for publications du Quebec](#)

Appendix 5: Regulation respecting the standards for equivalence of diplomas and training for the issue of a physiotherapist's permit or a physical rehabilitation therapist's permit - *Professional Code (R.S.Q., c. C-26, s. 94, par. q)* [Click here for Professional Code](#)

INTRODUCTION

The Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec (OPPQ) is receiving a growing number of applications from applicants from other provinces and countries asking to have their degrees recognized as equivalent and wanting to get training in order to obtain a license to practise physiotherapy. The Order has also noted that at the time of submitting their applications, some applicants seem not to know a great deal about current realities in Quebec.

This guide is designed to provide information for applicants on the process of obtaining a license to practise physiotherapy in Quebec and set forth the steps to be taken in the equivalence process.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

The profession

In Quebec, we define physiotherapy as a front-line health-science discipline that intervenes to provide prevention and health promotion, assessment and diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders and disabilities that involve the neurological, musculoskeletal and cardiorespiratory systems.

Physiotherapy is practised by two categories of professionals in Quebec; their scope of practice is governed by the Professional Code, which stipulates that it is mandatory to obtain a license to practise here. The OPPQ issues licenses to applicants who meet the necessary criteria.

The professionals

The only physiotherapy professions recognized under the professional system in Quebec are physiotherapist and physical rehabilitation therapist. Physiotherapists hold a professional master's degree, while physical rehabilitation therapists hold a specialized college-level degree. Both categories work closely with other health-care professionals.

You must be a member of the OPPQ to use the title of physiotherapist (P.T.). Physiotherapists cover the entire field of physiotherapy and may be consulted directly – in other words, clients do not require a referral or medical prescription to consult a physiotherapist.

You must be a member of the OPPQ to use the title of physical rehabilitation therapist (P.R.T). Physical rehabilitation therapists need to have an assessment from a physiotherapist or a medical diagnosis that includes relevant information on the client's condition before embarking on the intervention process. The profession of physical rehabilitation therapist exists only in Quebec.

Please click on the links below for further information on the two professions:

Regulation respecting the categories of permits issued by the Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec: [click here for categories of permits](#)

http://oppq.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Feuillet_T.R.P._VFR_Web_2013.pdf (in French only)

http://oppq.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Feuillet_pht_VFR_2013_Web.pdf (in French only)

The employment situation

Professional physiotherapists may work in the public sector, which is funded by the government (hospitals, specialized facilities, etc.) or in the private sector (in private practice or a private clinic).

There is currently a shortage of physiotherapists. The employment situation for physical rehabilitation therapists is stable. The situation changes from year to year, depending on supply and demand in various regions of the province.

For further information on salaries for professionals, the public sector and the employment situation, please visit the site of the Treasury Board, [Conseil du Trésor http://www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/en/human-ressources/conditions-de-travail-et-remuneration/echelles-salariales/](http://www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/en/human-ressources/conditions-de-travail-et-remuneration/echelles-salariales/) (in French only); or [the union](#) , or [Emploi Québec](#)

PROCEDURES FOR ISSUANCE OF LICENSES BY THE OPPQ

The issuance of licenses to practise physiotherapy in Quebec is based on where the applicant earned his or her degree; the applicant must also hold a license to practise physiotherapy.

For Canadian graduates

Canadian graduates who hold a valid license to practise physiotherapy in another Canadian province or territory

Applicants may request a license to practise as a physiotherapist in Quebec under the provisions of the *Regulation respecting the legal authorizations to practise the profession of physical therapist outside Québec which give access to the physical therapist's permit issued by the Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec – Professional Code (R.S.Q., c. C-26, s. 94, par. q)*.¹

Please click on the link below for further information:

<https://oppq.qc.ca/en/become-a-member/obtaining-a-license/canadian-graduates/>

Canadian graduates who have never held a valid license to practise physiotherapy in another Canadian province or territory

If you have **never been legally authorized** (held a valid license) to practise physiotherapy in another Canadian province, you must have graduated from a recognized physiotherapy program in Canada within the past three years to be eligible. You must also submit an equivalence file to the OPPQ Admissions Committee. Please click on the link below for further information:

<https://oppq.qc.ca/en/become-a-member/obtaining-a-license/canadian-graduates/>

¹ See Appendix 4.

For international graduates

Applicants trained in other countries who do not hold a valid license to practise in Canada must file an equivalence application under the *Regulation respecting the standards for equivalence of diplomas and training for the issue of a physiotherapist's permit or a physical rehabilitation therapist's permit - Professional Code (R.S.Q., c. C-26, s. 93, pars. c, c. 1)*.² The process, which includes an analysis of the applicant's academic qualifications and experience, is designed to identify similarities and differences that will help to establish whether the applicant is entitled to practise physiotherapy in Quebec. The Order has improved the equivalence process to help applicants demonstrate their savoir-faire in view of a skills-based equivalence.

Equivalence process

1. Opening a file

Opening a file, the first step in the equivalence process, officially occurs once an application for equivalence has been submitted, with full payment of the required fee, \$747.34 (including taxes). The fee also covers the examination of the file by the Admissions Committee.

Once a file has been opened, other documents may be sent to the Order as they become available. A full list of documents to be sent in appears as Appendix 2 to this guide.

Please note that documents that were not originally drawn up in French or English must be translated into French. The translation must be certified as a true copy of the original by a member of the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec <http://ottiaq.org/en> or by an authorized consular or diplomatic representative. Incomplete files will not be forwarded to the Admissions Committee.

2. Admissions Committee

The committee holds four or five meetings a year. Two parts of the file are analyzed: the academic record and professional experience.

3. Results of the equivalence process

Once the committee has examined the applicant's file, equivalence in terms of degree and training may be fully granted, granted with reservations, partially granted, or refused. When equivalence is granted, the committee will recommend how best to obtain full equivalence if necessary. This may involve a requirement to take courses, take refresher or upgrade training, or meet specific conditions, as required by the applicant's situation. When equivalence is refused, the applicant will need to complete the initial training to obtain a license.

However, when partial equivalence is granted, in certain cases the Admissions Committee may request an assessment of the applicant's skills as a second step.

4. Skills assessment

² See Appendix 5.

The assessment of skills is based on clinical case histories commonly encountered in physiotherapy (orthopedics, neurology, cardiorespiratory conditions). These clinical situations are based on the benchmark skills document developed by the Order.

The assessment is designed to give applicants an opportunity to show that they have mastered the skills required to implement a physiotherapy analysis and intervention process. Please note that this does not mean skills assessment by multiple choice questions; it means that the applicant has demonstrated that she or he possesses the skills needed to practice physiotherapy in Quebec.

The assessment is divided into two parts: a directed interview, followed by observation in a simulated working situation. The interview covers the professional's analytical process, from receiving a treatment request through follow-up once the client's regular treatments have been completed. During the observation, the applicant will need to perform two prescribed activities on a hypothetical patient and demonstrate her or his savoir-faire in front of the panel.

The result of the skills assessment process may determine whether the applicant is eligible for refresher training courses or may facilitate the development of a personalized prescription tailored to the applicant's situation in terms of obtaining equivalence.

5. Executive Committee

This committee is the decision-making body that makes recommendations to the Admissions Committee and makes decisions based on the results of the equivalence process.

6. Initial registration

Applicants who have obtained their equivalence may have their names entered on the membership roll like other applicants who earned their physiotherapy degrees in Quebec and obtain their license to practise according to the procedures in effect. To apply, fill in the appropriate form, pay the initial registration fee, annual membership dues, and any other special fees that are applicable.

Please click on the link below for further information:

<http://oppq.qc.ca/devenir-membre-de-lordre/obtenir-un-permis/diplomee-au-quebec/> (in French only)

Review

Once the applicant has been informed of the result of her or his equivalence request, she or he may request a review of the decision within the time period provided for under the Regulation by adding new documents to the file that may affect the decision of the Review Committee.

OFFICE QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE (OQLF)

French is the official language of Quebec. Under the terms of the Charter of the French Language - see English version at http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/C11/C11_A.html - the Order will issue a temporary license valid **for a period of up to one year** to individuals from outside Quebec who have been deemed eligible to practise the profession but who do not meet the requirements of the Charter of the French Language in terms of knowing the official language of Quebec. Section 35 of the Charter stipulates as follows:

“A person is deemed to have the appropriate knowledge if:

(1) he has received, full time, no less than three years of secondary or post-secondary instruction provided in French;

(2) he has passed the fourth or fifth year secondary level examinations in French as the first language;

(3) from and after the school year 1985-86, he obtains a secondary school certificate in Québec.

“In all other cases, a person must obtain a certificate issued by the Office Québécois de la langue française or hold a certificate defined as equivalent by regulation of the Government.”

During the first twelve months of holding a temporary license, the holder must take the OQLF exam at least once, failing which the license may be revoked. After passing the exam, she or he will obtain a regular license.

If it takes the applicant more than one year to pass the French examination, the OQLF may give permission for the temporary license to be renewed annually for a maximum of three retakes based on the criteria mentioned above. It is your responsibility to take the appropriate steps to regularize your situation and to notify the OPPQ.

If, after these renewals, you still have not passed the OQLF examination, your temporary license will be revoked and you will lose the right to practise **until you pass the exam**.

Please click on the link below for further information:

http://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/francisation/ordres_prof/documents/20130214_renouvellement_per_mis.pdf

CONCLUSION

Applicants devote a great deal of energy to the process of obtaining equivalence. We hope that this guide will prove to be helpful as you proceed with your application to the OPPQ.

For further information, please contact the OPPQ admissions coordinator, Uriel Pierre, at 514 351-2770, ext. 245, or by email at upierre@oppq.qc.ca.

TABLE OF FEES PAYABLE (including taxes)

Categories of professionals	Opening and examining the file	Skills assessment	Second examination of the file*	Initial registration	Annual dues
Physiotherapist	\$747.34	\$1,000	\$172.46	\$100	\$616.45 to \$692.75
Physical rehabilitation therapist	\$747.34	\$1,000	N/A	\$100	\$600.36 to \$629.79

* Valid for physiotherapist applicants who would like to request equivalence for the P.R.T. designation at the same time.

STEPS IN THE EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

Six possible scenarios for physiotherapists or P.R.T.s

Scenario	File	Admissions Committee	Skills assessment	Executive Committee	Equivalence	Training	License
1	x	X	not required	x	refused	Initial	X
2	x	X	x	x	refused	Initial	X
3	x	X	x	x	Partially granted	refresher courses	X
4	x	X	not required	x	Partially granted	refresher courses	X
5	x	X	not required	x	Granted with reservations	Personalized	x
6	X	X	not required	x	Fully granted	Personalized	X

CHECKLIST FOR EQUIVALENCE APPLICATION FILE

1. Formulaire de demande d'équivalence en physiothérapie (Request for equivalency in Québec) , duly filled in, with a passport-type photo	★
2. Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors Québec (comparative evaluation for studies done outside Quebec – available on request from the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la diversité et de l'inclusion du Québec (MIDI)) http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/education/comparative-evaluation/	★
3. Up-to-date curriculum vitae	★
4. Formulaire d'analyse des cours de la formation suivie et réussie (form for the analysis of training courses taken and passed), duly filled in (physiotherapist or physical rehabilitation therapist)	★
5. Certified copy of degrees in support of application	★
6. Certified copy of transcripts in support of application (must be in English or in French)	★
7. Institutional descriptions of courses in professional university programs relating to professional practice (physiotherapist or physical rehabilitation therapist, depending on the type of license you are applying for) (<i>must be in English or in French</i>)	★
8. Certificates of participation in continuing education activities or professional development relating to professional practice	
9. Descriptions of training courses or professional development relating to professional practice	
10. Statement of professional experience , duly filled in, depending on the type of license you are applying for (physiotherapist or physical rehabilitation therapist)	★
11. Attestations of work experience relating to professional practice	★
12. Certified copy of license to practise , if applicable	
13. Proof of knowledge of French	
14. Proof of payment of fee for opening and examining the application	★

★ **Must be included**

REFERENCES

OPPQ – Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec

www.oppq.qc.ca

MIDI – Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (Quebec ministry of immigration, diversity and inclusiveness)

<http://www.micc.gouv.qc.ca/fr/index.html>

OQLF – Office québécois de la langue française – French Language Office

http://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/francisation/ordres_prof/documents/20110801_info_ordres_prof.pdf

OPQ – Office des professions du Québec

<http://www.opq.gouv.qc.csa/>

CIQ – Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec

<http://www.professions-quebec.org/>

Conseil du trésor du Québec – Quebec Treasury Board

<http://www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/ministre/conseil-du-tresor/>

Les Publications du Québec (government publications office)

<http://www3.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/loisreglements.en.html>