



International Acupuncture Association of Physical Therapists

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Chairman: Kerry Fung (Hong Kong)
Secretary: Susan Kohut (New Zealand)

IAAPT Accreditation Scheme for Basic Acupuncture Education for Physical Therapists / Physiotherapists

Objectives

This scheme is designed to set out standards for and accredit programs that meet the requirement of the International Acupuncture Association of Physical Therapists (IAAPT) in the basic requirement for acupuncture education for Physical Therapists / Physiotherapists to use the technique safely and effectively. Physical Therapists / Physiotherapists who had taken the programs should be able to perform acupuncture and some related techniques based on a contemporary approach safely and effectively in the treatment of common pain and musculoskeletal conditions. Dry Needling is considered a form of Acupuncture by IAAPT and it is encouraged that Physical Therapists should have understanding of the whole spectrum of Acupuncture, from Traditional to Modern Acupuncture to Dry Needling, but they may opt to practice acupuncture according to all or any specific category.

Required Elements of Program Design

The programs should be designed to be delivered in **at least 80 Contact Hours*** with demonstration of the following mandatory contents:

- 1. Basic Concepts of Contemporary Acupuncture (Biomedical Acupuncture and Dry Needling) and Traditional Chinese Acupuncture.**
- 2. Safe Application of Acupuncture and Related Techniques.**
- 3. Practical Application of Acupuncture for Pain Management and Common Musculoskeletal Disorders.**
- 4. Clinical Reasoning of Acupuncture Treatment within Physical Therapy**
- 5. Knowledge of evidence-based acupuncture treatment**

* A minimum of 80 contact hours are considered the basic requirement to ensure **safe acupuncture practice for Physical Therapists / Physiotherapists**. The 80 hours includes: contact hours / face to face teaching or supervised internship. It does not include hours of self-directed learning or unsupervised practice.



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Educators designing introductory acupuncture programs are not restricted to develop programs that contain more contact hours. 200 contact hours (including the 80-hour Introductory program) are recommended for an Intermediate level program. Advanced program should consist of 300 or more contact hours.

IAAPT Recommended Curriculum Criteria

The recommended curriculum for the program should include:

- **Traditional and Modern Theories of Acupuncture (the balance of which is at the individual program designer's discretion)**
- **Safety Guidelines and Hygienic Practice of Acupuncture**
- **Indications and Contraindications of Acupuncture**
- **Diagnostic skills**
 - **Clinical reasoning**
 - **Basic Theory and Principles of Diagnosis in TCM**
- **Acupuncture Point Finding (Surface Anatomy) and Myofascial Trigger Point Identification, including major points of the limbs, back and head.**
- **Practical Needling Techniques**
- **Supervised Practice**
- **Ability to apply Evidence-based Practice to Treatment**

The curriculum *may* also include:

- Acupuncture Related Techniques, e.g. Moxibustion, Cupping, Coining (guasha), Acupressure, Dry Needling, etc.
- Special application, e.g. Electroacupuncture, Acupuncture-like TENS, etc.
- Microsystems, e.g. Auriculotherapy, Scalp Acupuncture, etc.
- Introduction to clinical application of acupuncture in neurological, respiratory and other disorders

The program should be delivered with **face-to-face teaching** or **supervised practice** that should construct the main programming of the 80-hour education.

Online Studies, distance learning, self-directed study and other non-contact pedagogical approaches may be utilised to enrich the program but should not substitute the minimum number of hours set forth by IAAPT.

The following Formative and Summative assessments may be used and are considered contact hours:

1. Student Presentation.



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2. Written Examination.
3. Practical Examination.
4. Clinical Placement.

Self-study of at least 160 hours is expected from students in readings, assignments, and acupuncture practice, etc.

Some examples of program design are shown in the appendix for reference. However, they are **not** intended to be restrictive. Program developers may design programs in accordance with local, cultural, legal or other needs or requirements. Nevertheless, they must fulfill the above-mentioned criteria.

Teaching Faculty

Faculty members may be drawn from different professional disciplines who are qualified to deliver lectures, teach practical acupuncture needling, supervise practice and supervise clinical attachment or placement in acupuncture. However, at least one member of the faculty must be a qualified physical therapist / physiotherapist with current membership of their Physical Therapy Association that is a member of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy.

Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction may be in any local language or dialect that is suitable for the participants according to the needs of different countries or areas. However, there must be an English version of the program details for the assessment of an application for accreditation submitted to IAAPT.

Entrance & Graduation Requirement

The main cohort of applicants must be duly registered or recognized physical therapists / physiotherapists. Other relevant medical and health care professionals may enroll in the program according to local requirements. Education for these participants is not recognized as IAAPT accredited.

The program must assess students to ensure adequacy of knowledge and safe needling practice. A written examination and a practical examination are mandatory requirements. Other forms of assessment, e.g. student presentation, clinical placement, continuous assessment of return demonstration, etc. may also be included in the evaluation of student performance. The assessments should ensure that the student can utilize acupuncture (or dry needling) based on sound



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physical therapy assessment utilizing clinical reasoning (whether TCM diagnostic or Western biomedical principles) and using acupuncture in a safe and effective manner.

Award of IAAPT Certification to qualifying students requires demonstration of 80 contact hours of education and supervision and the passing of all written and practical examinations, and, if applicable, other forms of assessment (e.g. presentation, continuous assessment and clinical placement).

Certification issued by IAAPT

Upon successful accreditation of the program, IAAPT will issue a “**Certificate of Accreditation**” to the school, association or authority (the institution) holding the education program. The certificate is valid for 4-years and it is expected that the institution continuing to run the program should apply for an updated accreditation from IAAPT within the 4-year cycle. The institution may use the phrase “**Accredited by the International Acupuncture Association of Physical Therapists, an Official Sub-group of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy**” or its abbreviated or local equivalent to describe the program they offered while the certificate of accreditation is valid. The institution should inform the IAAPT if there is any change in their curriculum (not time-table).

A certificate to the student who have undertaken and passed the assessments may also be issued a “Certificate of Acupuncture for Physical Therapists (Physiotherapists)” for the accredited program. The application for this certificate must be initiated by the Institute that offered the program and proof of the studentship and successful completion of the program should be included in the application.

Fees

- Application for Accreditation of the Program: GBP300
- Application for issuance of Certificate of Acupuncture for Physical Therapists (Physiotherapists) for individual students: GBP20 per each certificate



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Application Procedure

Fill out relevant forms and submit it via email to contact@iaapt.physio or by mail to GPO Box 4310, Hong Kong (Attention: Kerry Fung).

All fees should be paid to the account of IAAPT via Bank Transfer. Invoice will be advised in due course.

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Appendix

Examples of Introductory Acupuncture Program

These examples demonstrate how an introductory course may be designed. It is not intended to be restrictive. Program developers may design programs that fulfill the objectives of IAAPT in accordance with local, cultural, legal or other needs or requirements.

Example 1 – Classroom teaching with designated Clinical Attachment

Day 1	Basic Concepts of Acupuncture and the Spectrum of Practice – including: Traditional Asian Acupuncture (TA) Western or Biomedical Acupuncture (WA) Trigger Point Dry Needling (DN) Mechanism and Therapeutic Effects of Acupuncture Practice Indications and Contraindications for Acupuncture Clinical Reasoning for Acupuncture in Physical Therapy
Day 2	Basic Concepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine Safety and Hygiene in Acupuncture Treatment Adverse and Emergency Situations in Acupuncture General Acupuncture Techniques
Day 3	The Meridian System Surface Anatomy of the Meridians and Common Acupuncture Points (1)
Day 4	Surface Anatomy of the Meridians and Common Acupuncture Points (2)
Day 5	Mechanism of Action of Acupuncture Practice in Pain and Musculoskeletal Disorders e.g. TA theories / WA neuroscience
Day 6	Myofascial Trigger Point Therapy and Dry Needling
Day 7	Introduction to Acupuncture Related Techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electroacupuncture • Moxibustion • Cupping • Coining (Guasha)
Day 8	Clinical Placement
Day 9	Clinical Placement
Day 10	Student Presentation Written Examination Practical Examinations

* based on 8 hours of programing per day.



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Example 2 – Classroom teaching with clinical practice done by students at their place of practice

Day 1	Basic Concepts of Acupuncture and the Spectrum of Practice Western or Modern Medical Acupuncture (MMA) Mechanism and Therapeutic Effects of MMA
Day 2	Basic Concepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine The Meridian System
Day 3	Indications and Contraindications for Acupuncture Clinical Reasoning for Acupuncture in Physiotherapy Safety and Hygiene in Acupuncture Treatment Adverse and Emergency Situations in Acupuncture
Day 4	General Acupuncture Techniques Surface Anatomy of the Meridians and Common Acupuncture Points (1)
Day 5	Surface Anatomy of the Meridians and Common Acupuncture Points (2) Student Presentation (1)
Day 6	Surface Anatomy of the Meridians and Common Acupuncture Points (3) Myofascial Trigger Point Therapy and Dry Needling
Day 7	Acupuncture Related Techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Electroacupuncture ● Moxibustion ● Cupping ● Coining
Day 8	Acupuncture Treatment for Common Musculoskeletal Conditions Introduction to Auricular Acupuncture (Auriculotherapy)
Day 9	Acupuncture Treatment for Common Neurological Conditions Introduction to Scalp Acupuncture
Day 10	Case Studies Student Presentation (2) Written and Practical Examinations

** Students may be issued an interim certificate showing to employers or local authorities that they were educated in the safe and hygienic application of acupuncture so that they may perform some clinical application in their own clinical setting after the 4th or 5th session.*

** based on 8 hours of programming per day.*



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Example 3 – 80 hours programming with emphasis on Dry Needling

Day 1	Basic Concepts of Acupuncture and the Spectrum of Practice – from Traditional Chinese Acupuncture to Dry Needling Western or Modern Medical Acupuncture (MMA) Mechanism and Therapeutic Effects of MMA Indications and Contraindications for Acupuncture and Dry Needling
Day 2	Basic Concepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine The Meridian System Surface Anatomy of the Meridians and Major Acupuncture Points Comparison between Acupuncture and Dry Needling Safety and Hygiene in Acupuncture and Dry Needling Treatment Adverse and Emergency Situations in Acupuncture and Dry Needling
Day 3	Clinical Reasoning for Acupuncture in Physical Therapy Pain and Pain Modulation Myofascial Trigger Points – Nature and Identification Myofascial Trigger Point Therapy and Dry Needling Application of Acupuncture in Neurological Conditions General Acupuncture and Dry Needling Techniques
Day 4	Dry Needling Techniques – Upper Limbs (1)
Day 5	Dry Needling Techniques – Upper Limbs (2)
Day 6	Dry Needling Techniques – Lower Limbs (1)
Day 7	Dry Needling Techniques – Lower Limbs (2)
Day 8	Dry Needling Techniques – Back and Neck (1)
Day 9	Dry Needling Techniques – Back and Neck (2)
Day 10	Written and Practical Examinations

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Example 4 – 200 hours curriculum

<p>Module 1: The TCM conceptual model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to TCM – the 5 elements concept • Introducing and presenting the Meridian system • TCM diagnostics • Zang – Fu organs theory • Bi syndromes • Homeostasis in TCM 	<p>40 hours</p>
<p>Module 2: The Biomedical Acupuncture conceptual model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local effect of acupuncture • Segmental effect of acupuncture • General or Homeostatic effect of acupuncture • Pain: Assessment and management with acupuncture • Anti-inflammatory effect of acupuncture • Psycho-neuro-immunology and acupuncture • Placebo and Nocebo effect • Autonomic regulation of acupuncture 	<p>50 hours</p>
<p>Module 3: Surface anatomy, identification, differentiation and nomenclature of acupuncture points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CNS and PNS basics • Acupuncture points: recognition and characteristics • Anatomy and physiology of the acupuncture point 	<p>10 hours</p>
<p>Module 4: Biomedical Related Techniques</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trigger Point Therapy. Theory and Practice. • Electro-acupuncture: an evidence based approach • Auricular acupuncture: The Nogier approach • The Gunn approach: Intramuscular Stimulation • The Baldry approach: Minimal acupuncture 	<p>40 hours</p>



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Module 5: TCM related techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moxibustion • Cupping • Guasha • Microsystems in Acupuncture 	<p>20 hours</p>
Module 6: Acupuncture indications for other pathologies - clinical reasoning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Reasoning basics • Musculoskeletal pain syndromes • The aging spine • Acupuncture in Sports • Acupuncture in Neurological conditions • Acupuncture in Cephalalgia • Acupuncture in Chronic Pain syndromes • Acupuncture in TMJ pain and dysfunction 	<p>30 hours</p>
Module 7: Safety regulations and precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety regulations by IAAPT • Indications and contra-indications of acupuncture • Basic Life Support 	<p>10 hours</p>



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Example 5 – 200 hours curriculum with clinical placement in a TCM Hospital or Physiotherapy Clinic

Module 1 – Principles of Acupuncture (66 hours)

- Perspective and History of Acupuncture in Physiotherapy
- From Meridians to Dry Needling – The Philosophies and Spectrum of Modern Acupuncture
- Pain and Pain Modulation
- Fundamental Theory in Chinese Medicine
- Diagnosis in Chinese Medicine
- Meridians and Acupuncture Points
- Anatomical Basis of Acupuncture Points
- Therapeutics in Acupuncture I

Module 2 – Practice of Acupuncture (66 hours)

- Acupuncture Techniques
- Moxibustion
- Safety and Infection Control in Acupuncture
- Therapeutics in Acupuncture II
- Related Techniques of Acupuncture
- Special application of Acupuncture
- Western Acupuncture Approaches (Anatomical Approach, Segmental Acupuncture, Myofascial Trigger Point Therapy, Dry Needling)
- Evidence Based Practice in Acupuncture
- Topics of Acupuncture in Physiotherapy Practice

Module 3 – Clinical Practicum (68 hours)

Clinical Practicum

To be conducted in a TCM Hospital in China or a Physiotherapy Clinic using Acupuncture