

American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education



BOD Y05-25-01-01 [Amended BOD Y06-21-02-06; BOD G12-18-03-07; BOD G09-15-02-04; BOD G03-14-09-07; BOD 02-14-12-09; BOD G12-13-05-11; BOD G10-10-02-03; EC G08-10-01-02; G05-10-03-04; Initial: BOD G08-09-05-12] [Policy]

I. Purpose

Pursuant to association policy [American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education Recognition](#), the American Physical Therapy Association recognizes the American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education as the agency for the accreditation of physical therapy residency and fellowship education programs.

II. ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners, Including Composition, Eligibility, Terms, and Term Limits

A. Size of the ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners: 10-members.

B. Composition of the ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners and Commissioner Eligibility

1. Eight commissioners are physical therapists who are APTA members in good standing with a minimum of two years' experience with any of the following:

a. Candidacy Review Panel.

b. Committee on Clinical Residency and Fellowship Program Credentialing (former group, which no longer exists).

c. Accreditation Services Council (former group, which no longer exists).

d. Program Services Council (former group, which no longer exists).

e. Candidacy Review Council (former group, which no longer exists).

2. Two commissioners are public members, and each individual shall not be a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant.

C. Appointment of ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners: ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners.

D. Length of Term and Term Start Date: four years with each term beginning on January 1.

E. Maximum Number of Consecutive Full Terms: one with partial terms not considered a full term.

III. Responsibilities of the ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners:

A. Establishes the quality standards, processes, and procedures that each residency or fellowship program is required to meet to be accredited and amends these requirements as appropriate.

B. Provides an efficient and credible system for the evaluation, accreditation, and renewal of accreditation of physical therapy residency and fellowship education programs.

C. Provides formal recognition of ABPTRFE-accredited residency and fellowship programs.

- D. Makes decisions independently concerning the pre-accreditation or accreditation status with respect to monitoring, granting, denying, withdrawing, or conditioning accreditation of any program.
- E. Appoints candidacy review panelists and Standards Committee.
- F. Ensures that commissioners, candidacy review panelists, and program reviewers are trained sufficiently to meet the needs of ABPTRFE.
- G. Addresses the demand for accredited residency and fellowship programs by promoting wide regional representation and access to all specialty and subspecialty practice areas.
- H. Fosters retention of accredited residency and fellowship programs.
- I. Identifies new and existing resources for residency and fellowship programs.
- J. Acts on all grievance issues and appeals.
- K. Sets reasonable and appropriate accreditation fees to ensure that ABPTRFE can carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively, and that the commission can cover the allocated fair market value for its proportionate share of joint use (e.g., building services, human resources, legal services, technology); the joint use does not compromise the independence and confidentiality of the accreditation process.

IV. Responsibilities of the APTA Board of Directors

- A. Assumes legal and fiduciary obligations on behalf of the American Physical Therapy Association, including the outcomes resulting from ABPTRFE action or inaction.
- B. Approves the annual budget, including the program budget and related work plans for ABPTRFE that ensures ABPTRFE has the necessary resources to conduct high quality accreditation services.
- C. Reviews complaints related to ABPTRFE's adherence to its processes and procedures.
- D. Ratifies selection of ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners for indemnification purposes.
- E. Conducts periodic reviews of ABPTRFE, which occurs at least annually.
- F. Provides ABPTRFE with a liaison from the APTA Board of Directors.

V. Governance Structure and Autonomy

- A. APTA is the legal entity responsible for ABPTRFE, which functions as a part of APTA.
- B. APTA provides the legal/corporate and administrative infrastructure (i.e. budget, accounting, facilities, insurance, personnel) to ABPTRFE.
- C. ABPTRFE acts in alignment with APTA bylaws and policies and in doing so shall be autonomous in meeting its responsibilities as identified in III., above.
- D. The ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners and any groups appointed by ABPTRFE shall not direct or manage APTA employees; however, the Chair of the ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners shall be consulted by the supervisor of the program director at least semi-annually on the performance of the program director and resource sufficiency to support ABPTRFE functions.
- E. The Chair of the ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners shall report to the APTA Board of Directors.

74 VI. Amendment of This Policy

75 Amendments to this policy are made at the discretion of the Board of Directors and may be
76 requested by ABPTRFE Board of Commissioners. The APTA Board shall consult ABPTRFE Board of
77 Commissioners before making a policy change.

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80 **Explanation of Reference Numbers:**

81 BOD P00-00-00-00 stands for Board of Directors/month/year/page/vote in the Board of Directors minutes; the
82 "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, BOD P06-22-05-04 means that this position can be
83 found in the June 2022 Board of Directors meeting minutes on Page 5 and that it was Vote 4.

84 E: Binding Ethical Document | P: Position | Y: Policy

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86 **Last Updated:** 05/29/2025

87 **Contact:** governancehouse@apta.org