

PHYSIOTHERAPY – CAREER SNAPSHOT

Fast Facts	
 \$1,250 Weekly Pay 	
 25,000 workers Employment Size 	
 Very strong Future Growth 	
 Very high skill Skill level rating 	
 Lower unemployment Unemployment 	
 70.6% Full-Time Full-Time Share 	
 38.4 hours Average full-time 	
 31 years Average age 	
 65.4% female Gender Share	

Source: [Job Outlook, February 2019](#)

Physiotherapy is part of the broad [Allied Health](#) family of professions. It is concerned with treating acute musculoskeletal, respiratory, neurological and other disorders to help patients improve the quality of their lives. It helps recovery from injury and/or prevention of injury, reduction of pain and stiffness, increase of mobility by means of manipulation, joint mobilisation, massage, hydrotherapy, acupuncture, rehab exercise along with many other techniques. Physiotherapy is thus different from the Allied Health profession Exercise Physiology in that the latter uses almost solely science-informed exercise interventions to prevent and manage chronic disease or musculoskeletal injury (without manual manipulation). Physiotherapists must have the capacity for independent, objective, and comprehensive assessment and diagnosis as they can work with self-referred patients, as part of multidisciplinary teams, or with patients referred from General Practitioners or other health professionals.

To gain a better understanding of the role of a physiotherapist view this

[video](#) prepared by Australian Physiotherapy Association.

Employment Settings

Physiotherapy graduates are employed in the following types of settings:

- Public and private hospitals
- Acute and community rehabilitation units
- Community health centres
- Rehabilitation settings
- Sports medicine clinics
- Private practice/general practices
- Research and evaluation

Registration and Professional Bodies

All Physiotherapists working in Australia are required to be registered with the [Physiotherapy Board of Australia](#) (via [Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency](#) AHPRA) to practice, and the JCU Physiotherapy course is accredited with AHPRA. You will be eligible and required to apply for registration upon or before your graduation. Registration with AHPRA, apart from being a legal requirement for practice, reassures prospective clients that you meet the minimum professional standards and are covered by the professional indemnity insurance. The website is open to general public and has a facility to check all current and de-listed/prohibited health practitioners.

Professional Associations and peak bodies represent professions and assist with maintaining standards, and lobbying and advocacy, offer professional development and networking opportunities (community of practice), help with marketing services and can be used to [identify professionals operating nearby](#). They can be a great source of insights, shadowing, mentoring, or part time or project jobs.

Join [Australian Physiotherapy Association](#) Undergraduate students can join for free.

[Australian Physiotherapy Council](#) ensures the best professional development and educational outcomes for the physiotherapy community in Australia including accrediting tertiary education courses on behalf of AHPRA and providing accredited professional development programs, disseminating relevant industry news and assessing foreign qualifications.

Volunteering: develop skills

Volunteering can give you more exposure to areas of professional interest, such as working with children, refugees, seniors, people with disability, defence personnel, educational settings, or give you a taste of what it is like to work for a healthcare outlet like large hospital.

It's also an opportunity to show your work ethic, develop transferable skills such as communication, collaboration etc. demonstrate your values and caring behaviours, give back to the community, grow your professional and community networks and demonstrate extra commitment to future employers and clients.

Hospital systems

- [Townsville Hospital Foundation](#)
- [Mater Health Services](#)

Community

- [Choice Passion Life](#)
- [Australian Red Cross](#)
- [St John Ambulance](#)
- [Volunteering North Queensland](#)
- [Townsville Community Directory](#)

Overseas volunteering

Projects can be found by searching "allied health volunteering overseas". Many of these will be via companies that will organise your experience for a fee. Be aware that ethical issues surround some (but not all) so-called *voluntourism* projects.

To choose wisely, consider:

- What will be the outcome of my volunteering adventure?
- Am I doing it for the right reasons?
- What skills can I offer developing countries to empower their next generation to be self-sufficient?
- If not, your participation might be exploitative. More info can be found in [this post](#) by Save the Children

Employability



BOOST YOUR PROSPECTS



Explore your options, clarify your career goals



Build your networks



Gain course relevant experience



Fine tune your job application skills



Show initiative, engage in extra-curricular activities and stand out

For further ideas, access the [JCU Career Action Plan](#)

Your course provides a safe environment to develop your **clinical knowledge and skills** specific to being a Physiotherapist.

It also teaches you the **transferrable skills** required to be effective, such as building rapport, developing good working relationships with patients and their families, giving effective instructions, coaching and motivating, working in multidisciplinary teams; accurate report writing and record keeping, compliant with rules and regulations; ability to handle sensitive or confidential matters appropriately; time management; and developing good working relationships with patients' families, amongst other things.

A combination of technical and transferable skills demonstrated through **extra-curricular experiences** and workplace-related experiences within your course make you more employable in the eyes of

employers. Make sure to pencil in relevant extra-curricular activities into your calendar every semester.

Track your experience

As part of your *reflective practice* as a Physiotherapist, you'll need to track and reflect on your professional development for registration purposes, so it's a good habit to get into right now. It will help you write better job applications as well. Health services will often list values on their websites. They can be a useful guide for categorising experience to prove your suitability to their roles. For example, [Townsville Hospitals' values](#) are:

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Accountability
- Respect
- Engagement

Innovation and Enterprise

Health care is the fastest growing industry in Australia and innovation (identifying what could be done better and then coming up with the plan how to make it happen) can improve service delivery as well as develop new technologies to assist in better diagnosis and treatment for patients. To read more about future trends in healthcare, see [The Medical Futurist](#) and [Careers with Health](#) online magazine.

Enterprising mindset is not limited to setting up and managing your own freelance Physiotherapy practice. More importantly, it means seeing problems and difficulties as a challenge and an opportunity to generate and test ideas aimed at addressing the problem. This often leads to process improvements at work and developing new ways of delivering the service. Employers are usually highly impressed with evidence of enterprising qualities.

JCU offers a range of free online courses on innovation/enterprising thinking, for example: [Developing an Enterprising Mindset](#) or [Lynda.com](#): e.g. Guy Kawasaki on Entrepreneurship; Small Business

Secrets; Entrepreneurship Foundations; etc.

[Student challenges and competitions](#) are a good way to develop your innovation and collaboration skills as well as to demonstrate your initiative and commercial awareness.

Identifying Opportunities

A range of websites list job opportunities for Physiotherapists:

- [Physio Council](#)
- [Queensland Health](#)
- [Queensland Govt Grad Portal](#)
- [Hays Healthcare](#)
- [Medijobs](#)
- [Medical Jobs Australia](#)
- [Medacs Health Care](#)
- [Health Care People](#)
- [Your World Healthcare](#)
- [Seek](#)
- [Glassdoor](#)

For part-time, course relevant and graduate job listings go to JCU's online job board [CareerHub](#).

Job opportunities are often posted on employer websites, for example [Kinnect](#), [Allied Connect](#), [North and West Regional Health](#), along with their LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter feeds.

Use your Networks

Keeping in touch with placement supervisors and staff will ensure you're informed of job openings when they occur, or sometimes before they are advertised.

Use LinkedIn

Investigate [JCU Alumni LinkedIn](#) profiles to identify career pathways and current and past employers of JCU Physiotherapy graduates and connect or follow them.

Follow employers of choice and **industry bodies** to ensure you don't miss their updates and job listings, e.g. Queensland Health, Queensland Department of Education and Training, AHPRA, Australian Physiotherapy Association etc.