

# Supporting Allied Health Professionals in their Role as Practice Educators

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## 1. Aim of this work?

What continuing professional development (CPD) do Allied Health Professions' practice educators (PEs) feel are beneficial for supporting positive learning experiences for students during practice placements?

## 2. Context to this work?

- Four Scottish-based universities run AHP pre-registration programmes for 12 discrete professions.
- In Scotland, placements are provided across 16 NHS Boards, in local government and the third sector.
- The AHP regulatory body requires practice educators to have regular CPD to support their role as a practice educator.
- Practice educator training sessions are provided to staff from all sectors by the universities. These sessions are open to practice educators within each profession & can take place in university or in a NHS site.
- NHS Education for Scotland (NES) funds AHP Practice Education Leads (PELs) within each NHS Board. The PEL supports increasing capacity & supports practice education within the AHP workforce.
- Little is known about what AHP PEs feel they require in relation to CPD for supporting student learning on placement.

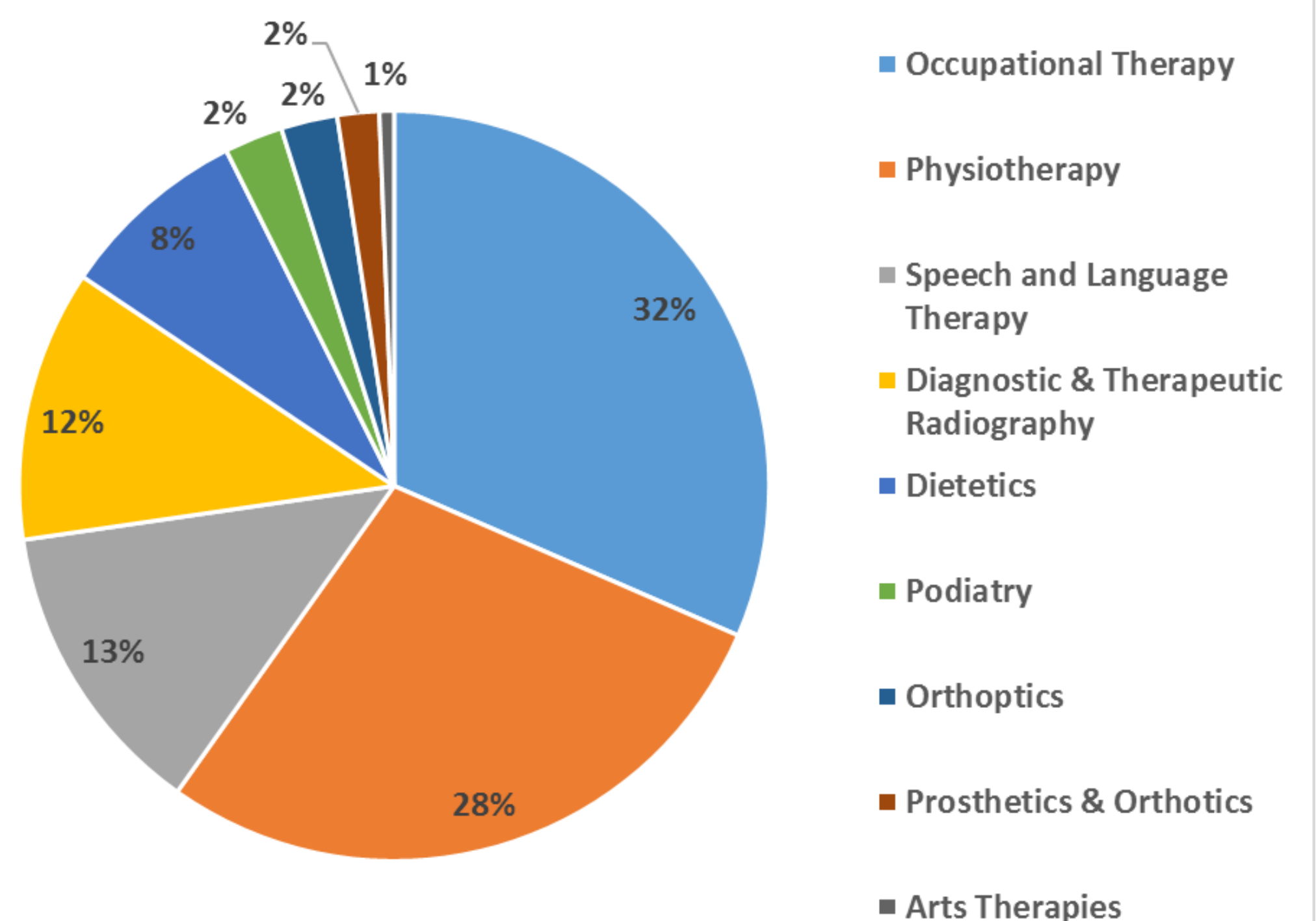
## 3. What approach has been taken?

Each university has a co-ordinator for PE preparation sessions. A short life collaborative working group with university co-ordinators, NES & PELs came together to create a questionnaire:

- Open & closed questions were used with a five-point likert scale for closed questions
- Topics explored included providing student support, facilitating learning & the role of the PE.
- Following piloting, the questionnaire was distributed through university & PEL networks to AHP PEs in all sectors in Scotland.

## 4. Who responded?

Percentage of Responses per Profession (N=1028)



1128 respondents

12 professions

Only 45 respondents from out with NHS

11% of NHS Scotland regulated AHP workforce

68% were experienced educators

63% full-time & 37% part-time employment

## 5. What were the findings?

The five most popular preferred CPD themes (in descending order) were:

1. Managing the needs of a failing student
2. Self-assessing skills as a practice educator
3. Conflict management
4. Providing reasonable adjustments for students with learning needs
5. Managing the needs of a high achieving student

Practice educators indicated they would like more support as a practice educator from:



Practice educators indicated that the CPD requirements of practice educators should include:

- Update knowledge of course content
- Support to manage a range of specific needs of students
- Support to develop general teaching skills as practice educators and to use specific facilitation activities

Practice educators suggested that further support could include:

- More regular and timely communication between universities and PEs before and during placement
- Regular updates on course content for different programme levels
- Clarification on expectations on students at different programme levels
- More peer support through groups and local networks