

Bangalore Physiotherapist Network

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News corner:

Bangalore Physiotherapist Network is a rapid growing apolitical gathering to know each other and for professional up gradation.

06:06:2010, Bangalore physiotherapist network organize the second B P network meeting and CME in mobility India, Bangalore.

CME on "Neuro developmental therapy" conducted by Dr. Ramesh PT. NDTA (USA) Certified instructor,

Brief eye opening about the NGO and its structure and functioning— as Mobility India an example: by Dr. Raju,

More than 50 participants participated in meeting and many conveyed the wishes on behalf of their busy schedules.

Participants are interested in this kind of activities.

Discussion held after the CME.

Activities:

More than 40 vacancies have been announced by network with two months and many vacancies filled.

More than 5 workshops have been announced by network.

All physiotherapists are requested to update the information with us for effective communication.

How to apply to US PhD

Just a decade back, a graduation in physiotherapy was enough to have a decent salary and a safe professional career. Soon things changed in last five years or so when even a masters in physiotherapy does not guarantee a job any more. No doubt, today most of the physiotherapists especially of those who are in academic background are aiming for the ultimate program in any discipline i.e. a doctorate in physiotherapy (PhD). This article is not for those who aim of doing PhD with just the intension of getting a higher qualification, there are so many dubious routes to get there, but this article is for those who crave for professional excellence through passion and deep seated desire to know more.

No matter how much of a nationalist one is, it must be admitted that physiotherapy research in India is all about copying foreign studies and manipulating data (to suit the literatures) which will be churned into results by using latest version of SPSS package (I would be more than happy if someone can prove me wrong!). I am not blaming the professionals who are doing research here, but, the entire education system need to be blamed which makes us believe that a PhD is a personal affair which does not hold any responsibility for the society. That's why India may be the only place where PhD is paid with annual fees and absolutely no funding at all! I heard of some funding agencies such as ICMR which funds medical research, but tapping funds from which is nothing short of an "Indiana Jones treasure hunt" for a physiotherapist, who is not even recognized as a professional, forget being called a researcher by government medical fraternity!

So what's the solution? Is there no means by which we can become a researcher and complete a PhD which is worth all the trouble? These are the questions that cross the mind of any physiotherapist willing to take up a research career. Don't worry there is a way out.

It is a known fact that United States is the best country to do research in the world. With the Obama government been very keen to promote R&D programs, many universities are surplus with funds ready to provide it to capable professionals irrespective of their nationality. Unlike in our country, PhDs programs in US (commonly referred as graduate programs) are nearly always funded programs with even monthly stipend. Although International students are not eligible for federal funds they can apply for teaching and research assistantships which will be enough to stay in US during the study period. The fees are usually waived on admission to PhD which means complete sponsorship.

Graduate programs vary from one university to another but generally it is a 4 or 5 years of program that has 2 integral parts, one is a 2 year Masters program followed by 2/3 years of research. Once the 1st 2 years are completed with satisfactory performance, you will be promoted to do research work under the chosen mentor. Final passing out is accompanied by defence of the PhD thesis. Questions arise as to how to grab this opportunity and harness it to the fullest

Here is a step by step process towards applying for it:

Never approach any agent for a PHD study: unlike a doctor in physiotherapy (DPT) where agents can help one through the admission process Phd is entirely depends upon finding an appropriate & willing guide/mentor.

Eligibility: anybody with bachelors in physiotherapy is eligible for joining the graduate program. Although a masters in physiotherapy with experience (esp academic) further strengthens ones chances of been accepted in the universities. Although some very few university programs demands that the PhD scholar must be a US license holder, most universities does not have that requirement as these programs are interdisciplinary in nature involving even other professionals such as a neurologist, an engineer etc.

GRE scores: most universities in US accept graduate record examination scores as an important selection criterion. This examination is a 4 hours rigorous process which can be given at various centres across India by prior registration at www.ets.org . This examination has 3 sections which includes (unlike one may believe) an easier analytical section (10th std mathematics) of 800 marks, a relatively tough quantitative section(graduate level English comprehension) of 800 marks and an analytical writing section (essay has to be typed within stipulated time) scored on a scale of 5. An acceptable score is anything $\geq 1100/1600$ with an evenly distributed score of >500 in both the sections and a $\geq 3.5/5$ in analytical writing. Although GRE score are a mandatory criteria but this is not the only decisive factors in the selection process.

TOEFL: all universities require the applicants to provide TOEFL scores for selection process. Register for the test at your nearest centre by visiting www.ets.org. TOEFL is an internet based examination (IbtTOEFL) which has 4 sections each scored out of 30 marks. For a good application you are expected to score above 21 in writing, 26 in reading, 26 in speaking, 26 in listening. To make certain for a Teaching assistant post ≥ 28 in speaking is necessary (applicants with lower score are made to undergo interview or an examination in 1st semester).

Next step is to make a list of at least 10 universities where you would like to do PhD. For making these lists consult sites such as www.usnews.com or www.phds.com for college ranking.

Writing to faculty: After going through the college websites look for the research work conducted by the faculty members and the kind of work conducted in their lab. Then write to the faculty of your choice directly expressing your interest in their work and explain how you can contribute to it based upon your background. *Note: Don't feel dejected if reply does not come (which happens very often), keep trying someone will reply. Never push yourself too hard with the mentors. Follow up with that faculty member who positively reply and apply to that university where he/she belongs.*

Last dates: There are 2 in-takes in all universities: Fall (August), & Spring (Feb). It is always advisable to apply for Fall intake as there is maximum funding and vacancy than spring. Check for apply deadline at each university's websites.

A strong Statement of Purpose (SOP): A well crafted SOP is a ticket to the University of Choice. SOP is an original description of yourself in limited words. It must tell the reader who you are, how did your education influenced you personally, what are the unique qualities of yours for which they should accept you and most importantly if given an opportunity what will you do as a graduate student. You can *google* for sample SOPs. You must always tightly edit the content yourself and also by your friends. Finally get it edited by an English teacher for potential grammatical errors. *Note: Please avoid self bragging, over dramatics and never copy someone else's SOP as there are software to detect plagiarism with the universities.*

Requirements for application: along with online application you will need 2 copies of transcripts directly posted from the college where you finished your BPT and MPT, statement of purpose, Curriculum Vitae, TOEFL and GRE score reported directly to the university and sometimes educational evaluation. Check the university check list for any specific requirements.

The application needs to be supported by 3 letters of references from your previous teachers and some of your colleagues. For this requirement refer the university website for details. I hope with this you can start your process towards achieving a fully funded PhD in US and give wings to the researcher and an academician hiding within you.

Thanks to Author : Dr.Jayakrishnan Nair, PhD Student 2010Batch, University of Florida. USA