



Residency, Fellowship or Certification Programs? What's the difference?

While all are great options to continue your professional growth there are a few key differences.

- **Clinical Excellence:** All models involve a pathway to clinical excellence via a variety of modes. Some programs include a series of weekend continuing education courses that build on each other. Here the focus is predominately on the development of skills and treatment techniques. With Residency and Fellowship, participants engage in both skills' development as well as mentored clinical practice to enhance the clinical reasoning in the application of such skills. Resident graduates are then also eligible to sit for the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialists (ABPTS) national exam to become a *Certified Clinical Specialist*.
- **Mentored Practice:** Residency and Fellowship training includes mentored clinical practice with specialists alongside a didactic curriculum that prepares you with foundational knowledge. Here you get to spend quality time with an expert already in the field.
- **Accreditation:** Both Residency and Fellowship programs undergo an accreditation process by the APTA's American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education (ABPTRFE) or through the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapy. This is in contrast to certification programs where there is minimal outside oversight. Certification programs are usually managed by their host organization and assist individuals with meeting their state license requirements and continuing education credits.

It sounds like Residency and Fellowship training are very similar- What's the difference?

While Residency and Fellowship Education look similar on the surface there are some major differences. Fellowships are technically a "sub-specialty" meaning they fall under another specialty area. For Orthopaedics there are six fellowship programs including Hand Therapy, Movement Systems, Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapy, Performing Arts, Spine, and Upper Extremity. Often, individuals transition their clinical specialty through an Orthopaedic Residency or previous experience. Here we have provided some of the technical differences between the two:

Orthopaedic Residency:	Orthopaedic Fellowship:
<p>Designed to take a generalist to a skilled clinician in orthopaedic practice gaining confidence in advanced interventions and clinical reasoning. Curriculums are based on the Description of Residency Practice in Orthopaedics and prepares graduates to sit for the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialists Orthopaedic Certified Specialist (OCS) Exam with components of foundational knowledge, examination, assessment, intervention, outcomes, critical assessment of research, and professional behaviors. There are 110 accredited Orthopaedic Residencies in the US.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Mentoring:</u> 150 hours (at least 100 hrs 1:1 in patient care) ○ <u>Didactic Hours:</u> Minimum of 300 hours 	<p>Expands beyond the specialization in orthopaedics and combines opportunities for ongoing clinical mentoring with a theoretical basis for developing in a subspecialty area of practice. Go from clinical specialist to a clinical expert. Fellowship training represents the highest level of recognized clinical training. There are 32 accredited Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapy Fellowships in the US in partnership with the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (AAOMPT), 3 Spine, 3 Upper Extremity, 2 Hand Therapy, and 2 Movement Systems Fellowships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Mentoring:</u> 150 hours (at least 75 hrs. 1:1 in patient care) ○ <u>Didactic Hours:</u> Minimum of 150 hours <p>***OMPT Fellowships may have different requirements</p>

What else do I need to know about Residency and Fellowship Education?

When considering different programs, it's important to look at what will work best for you and your long-term goals. We have provided some **Key elements to consider**:

- **Setting:** Hospital, private-practice, distance-based/hybrid, university
- **Duration:** Annual commitment or opportunity for long term employment
- **Mentorship:** mentor selection, frequency of mentorship, number of mentors, on/offsite
- **Faculty:** Methods of education, backgrounds, research
- **Learning style:** Live onsite or distant education
- **Teaching opportunities:** Grad school, Continuing Education
- **Reduced Salary or Tuition:** May differ based on the model of each program

Other Resources

	<p>Directory of Residency and Fellowship Programs: https://accreditation.abptrfe.org/#/directory</p>
	<p>Academy of Orthopaedic Physical therapy ORF-SIG Website: https://www.orthopt.org/content/special-interest-groups/residency-fellowship</p>
	<p>American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education's website: http://www.abptrfe.org/home.aspx</p>