Entrepreneurship in physiotherapy

*“Our position within the market is something to be guarded constantly, because things are hectic in health care. Consider for instance the rising costs of health care, cutbacks in health care (policy changes Basic health insurance; less coverage in the Additional health insurance), increased client contribution and rates under pressure. This trend will continue in our opinion. It’s already started in various areas: profession and science and the lobby towards stakeholders such as the government to prevent further policy measures and to urge more market balance. And do not forget the recently performed cost effectiveness assessment physiotherapy (the BMC assessment) which shows the value of physiotherapy as well as the cost efficiency.”*

From: <http://www.fysionet.nl/actueel/nieuwsoverzicht/nieuwe-routes_marktpositionering.html> 18-10-2012

**Introduction**

The health care sector has been subject to change over the recent years, from the perspective of care givers, of clients and of the institutional environment. Developments increasingly calling for a more enterprising attitude in health care. Enterprising behaviour that has been the order of the day in the private sector, is slowly finding its way into health care. Since 2012 the demand for physiotherapy has been in decline. The increase in patient flow towards physiotherapy ended at that point. Since 2012 the professional association is increasingly active to guard the market position. Apart from qualitative improvement of existing services and/or products, there is also a trend towards the development of new products.

**Education module Entrepreneurship in physiotherapy**

During the module ‘entrepreneurship in physiotherapy you will be working on the development of the professional competence ‘entrepreneurship’. This competence is describes as follows:

- The physiotherapist contributes – using a strengths/weaknesses and opportunities/threats analysis – to the development and execution of decisions on strategic level concerning the supply and demand of physiotherapeutic care and service, with the objective of improving the quality of the supply and the position of the organization in the direct market.-

The competence description is in line with the developments in the health care market.

Objectives ‘entrepreneurship’ module:

* The student makes an overview of current developments in the field of physiotherapy and translates this into consequences for physiotherapy in general and an organization in particular (performance indicator 5.1)
* The student can make propositions for the improvement of the quality of existing services/products or develops new services and/or products (performance indicator 5.2)
* The student is able to act in accordance with the goals and interests of an organization (e.g. clinical affiliation organization, programme) and the professional ethical standards (performance indicator 5.3)

The term entrepreneurship is often associated with starting your own business, investing your own money and taking personal risk. However, these are only a few of the aspects that are part of entrepreneurship. We can actually discern 4 roles:

* Market researcher
* Innovator
* Risk taker
* Manager

The roles of market researcher and innovator are in particular roles in which physiotherapists are limitedly active. Before 2012 there was indeed less necessity to be involved in these roles. There was no lack of patients before, but as was stated above, the market position is shifting.

During this module you will explore the physiotherapeutic care market, and possibly your attention is drawn towards certain relevant current developments that are interesting to physiotherapy in general and an organization in particular. You also may already have an idea, in which case it is also important to explore the need for this idea/product. To emphasize the relevance for physiotherapy it is important to search for a consumer or client. This could be for instance a practice or institution. Maybe you want to bring a relevant development to the attention, and see whether a product can be developed. Another possibility is that you already have a product in mind, which you want to bring to the attention.

In order to work as authentically as possible, you will establish a virtual company. You have 140 hours per person, which you have to account for, for the establishment of this company and the realization/development of the product. This module spans two education periods. During the first education period (P13 or P15), you will make a project plan and a business plan as well. Both products are graded, and the business plan is also assessed by an external expert. There are various ways to start a business. You must start with an idea which is further developed in a (project) plan. To realize the plan you need a company that is geared to optimally realize your plan. A format for the project plan and business plan is included in the appendix.

During the work group meetings you are coached by experienced teachers who will support you in your search for what is necessary to start a business. The internet (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce website) offers sufficient information on writing a business plan.

You receive a grade for the business plan. The teacher assessed the plan, among other things, on the following aspects:

- occasion

- market exploration

- product

- financial justification

- legal framework

At the end of education period 13 for students who follow the B route, or at the end of education period 15 (route A students) you will deliver the following products:

* Project plan (assessment: grade)
* Business plan (assessment: grade)
* Abstract and a well-design picture to upload in with the full project on the Fontys Entrepreneurship website (www.entportal.jouweb.nl)

During period 14 (and 16) the realization phase of the business plan takes place. At the end of this education period students present their company and the product they have developed. During the lecture, examples are given of such products. These can vary from an actual product (smartphone app) to an advice report. Experience shows that in case of some business plans the emphasis will either be on the role of innovator or the role of market researcher. The market exploration, competition analysis and marketing mix and such will be more emphasized and worked out during the realization phase. This means that each company actually focuses on market exploration and that the company delivers a product. In order to present, the following products must have been handed in with the teacher during the last work group meeting:

* Project plan
* Business plan
* Presentation (PowerPoint, etc)
* Product with appendices (e.g. posters, brochures, etc.
* Appendices:
  + feedback client or consumer
  + feedback on business plan by external expert
  + log of tasks and hours
  + individual reflection report

**N.B** Moreover the students need to upload the abstract of their business plan and a picture at the end of the period on the Fontys website (see guideline uploaded in the portal).

**Final grade**

70% of the grade is determined by the average of the business plan, the product and the presentation. The individual reflection report accounts for 30% of the final grade. The log and feedback by client or customer are also part of the product assessment. In particular the relevance of the product for the institution and practice and to what extent the product has met the expectations (see appendix 3). These appendices are conditional for the calculation of a final grade.