

Rigo Concept BSPTS PSSE Certification Program

Educational Pathway for Certification in Physiotherapeutic Scoliosis Specific Exercise (PSSE)

History of the Rigo Concept BSPTS

The Rigo Concept BSPTS (Barcelona Scoliosis Physical Therapy School) is an international educational organization dedicated to training physiotherapists, orthotists, and medical doctors in the conservative management of scoliosis and other spinal structural disorders. BSPTS promotes evidence-informed, multidisciplinary care and aligns its educational principles with the recommendations of the International Society on Scoliosis Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Treatment (SOSORT).

The origins of BSPTS can be traced back to the 1960s, when Elena Salva, a Catalan physiotherapist, introduced the Schroth Method to Barcelona, Spain. The Schroth Method was originally developed in Germany by Katharina Schroth in 1921 and was later expanded and popularized by her daughter, Christa Lehnert-Schroth, a physiotherapist. Elena Salva trained directly under both Katharina and Christa before establishing Schroth-based scoliosis rehabilitation in Barcelona.

During the late 1980s, Dr Manuel Rigo, Dr Gloria Quera-Salva (Elena Salva's daughter), and physiotherapist Núria Puigdevall Coderch further developed and refined the approach through clinical experience, research, and scientific advances in scoliosis management. Their work led to significant conceptual and technical evolution beyond the traditional Schroth framework.

As a result of these developments, the Barcelona team ceased certifying physiotherapists under the name "Schroth" in 2008 and formally established the Rigo Concept BSPTS as an independent scoliosis-specific physiotherapy approach. The Rigo Concept BSPTS incorporates its own classification system, treatment principles, corrective strategies, and clinical reasoning processes.

The three training schools that derive directly from the original Schroth Method are ISST-Schroth, led by A.M. Hennes; Schroth Best Practice®, developed by Dr Hans-Rudolf Weiss; and the Rigo Concept BSPTS, developed by Dr Manuel Rigo and colleagues. Although all three share historical roots, they have evolved into distinct approaches with important conceptual and technical differences.

General Objectives of Rigo Concept BSPTS Certification Courses

The Rigo Concept BSPTS certification courses are designed to provide healthcare professionals with the knowledge and clinical skills required to participate effectively in the multidisciplinary management of scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders. In accordance with SOSORT Guidelines of Clinical Practice, the courses aim to:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of scoliosis, including its assessment, natural history, prognosis, and conservative treatment options.
- Equip participants with the discipline-specific knowledge and competencies required to contribute effectively within a multidisciplinary team.
- Promote evidence-informed clinical decision-making, while encouraging critical thinking and constructive clinical reasoning when evaluating theories related to the causes and progression of scoliosis, assessment methodologies, and non-surgical treatment strategies, especially those related to physiotherapy and bracing.

Recognizing the distinct roles of healthcare professionals involved in scoliosis management, the Rigo Concept BSPTS offers dedicated certification pathways for three primary disciplines:

- **Rigo Concept Medical Management** – for Medical Doctors
- **Rigo Concept PSSE (Physiotherapeutic Scoliosis-Specific Exercises)** – for Physiotherapists
- **Rigo Concept Bracing** – for Orthotists

Each certification pathway shares the core principles of the Rigo Concept while providing profession-specific training tailored to the clinical responsibilities, decision-making processes, and practical skills required within that discipline.

The information that follows relates specifically to the **Rigo Concept PSSE certification program for Physiotherapists**.

BASE LEVEL

Foundation Knowledge in Scoliosis and Structural Spinal Disorders

The Base Level course is an online educational program designed for healthcare professionals seeking a foundational understanding of scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders. It provides the essential knowledge required to participate effectively in the multidisciplinary management of patients with spinal deformities and serves as the entry point to the Rigo Concept PSSE certification pathway.

The course consists of approximately 40 pre-recorded lectures, each lasting 10–15 minutes, with a total study time of approximately 8–10 hours. Participants may complete the course at their own pace over a four-month period.

For physiotherapists intending to progress to the Level 1 Rigo Concept PSSE course, successful completion of the Base Level course is required no later than two weeks prior to the commencement of Level 1.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Base Level course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the etiology, pathogenesis, and three-dimensional nature of scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders.
- Describe the morphological alterations of the spine and trunk in both the sagittal and coronal planes.
- Conduct a comprehensive clinical history and functional assessment of patients with scoliosis.
- Recognize and classify common structural spinal disorders and establish an appropriate clinical diagnosis.
- Interpret quality-of-life measures commonly used in scoliosis management.
- Analyze and interpret radiological investigations using contemporary digital assessment tools.
- Understand the principles, indications, and limitations of non-surgical treatment approaches, including physiotherapeutic scoliosis-specific exercises (PSSE) and bracing.
- Appreciate the role of scientific evidence in guiding conservative scoliosis management.
- Apply the principles outlined in the SOSORT Guidelines for Clinical Practice.

Educational Units

The Base Level curriculum is organized into eleven Educational Units (EUs):

EU 1 – The Normal Spine

An introduction to the anatomy, biomechanics, geometry, and stabilization mechanisms of the spine and trunk in three dimensions.

EU 2 – Sagittal Plane Disorders

Morphological disorders affecting the sagittal alignment of the spine, including juvenile hyperkyphosis (Scheuermann's disease) and related conditions.

EU 3 – Scoliosis Fundamentals

Definition, characteristics, and three-dimensional nature of scoliosis, including current concepts relating to etiology, pathogenesis, and progression.

EU 4 – Types of Scoliosis

An overview of Early Onset Scoliosis (EOS), Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis (AIS), and Adult Degenerative Scoliosis (ADS).

EU 5 – Natural History of Idiopathic Scoliosis

Progression, prognosis, skeletal maturity, and factors influencing the natural course of scoliosis.

EU 6 – Clinical Assessment

Digital postural assessment, functional evaluation, scoliometer measurement, spirometry, and quality-of-life assessment tools.

EU 7 – Radiological Assessment

Interpretation of radiological findings using digital measurement software, including Cobb angle measurement, vertebral rotation, central sacral vertical line analysis, point of inflexion identification, and pelvic parameter assessment.

EU 8 – Non-Surgical Management

Evidence-based conservative management of scoliosis, including PSSE, bracing, and an overview of current treatment approaches.

EU 9 – Introduction to Bracing

Principles of brace treatment, scanning technologies, brace classification systems, and an introduction to the Rigo Concept brace.

EU 10 – Introduction to Surgical Management

An overview of surgical indications, treatment objectives, contemporary surgical techniques, and current approaches to scoliosis surgery.

EU 11 – Introduction to the Rigo Concept BSPTS

Foundational principles of the Rigo Concept BSPTS, including an introduction to the Rigo Classification and the use of block diagrams in clinical decision-making.

Assessment

Knowledge acquisition is assessed through self-evaluation questions at the completion of each Educational Unit, followed by a final multiple-choice examination at the conclusion of the course.

LEVEL 1 PSSE

Assessment, Classification, Correction Principles, and Foundational Treatment Strategies

Level 1 PSSE provides physiotherapists with the core knowledge and practical skills required to assess, classify, and manage patients with idiopathic scoliosis and structural sagittal plane disorders using the Rigo Concept BSPTS methodology.

Building upon the foundational knowledge acquired during the Base Level course, Level 1 introduces participants to the clinical reasoning framework of the Rigo Concept, including clinical and radiological assessment, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment planning, classification, correction principles, and the application of scoliosis-specific exercises.

The course places particular emphasis on developing a comprehensive understanding of the three-dimensional nature of scoliosis and the Principles of Correction that underpin Rigo Concept treatment. Participants learn how to analyze individual curve patterns, apply the Rigo Concept Classification system, select appropriate correction strategies, and establish individualized treatment plans based on each patient's clinical and radiological presentation.

A central focus of Level 1 is the application of corrective exercises using unloading starting positions, with progressive transfer of corrective awareness into upright posture and activities of daily living. Participants deepen their understanding of the holistic philosophy of the Rigo Concept BSPTS, reflecting Dr Manuel Rigo's consistent message of *"Looking after the person, not just the curve,"* and recognising the importance of addressing the individual's overall well-being alongside their physical presentation.

The course also includes education relating to the historical development of the Rigo Concept from its Schroth origins, contemporary evidence supporting Physiotherapeutic Scoliosis-Specific Exercises (PSSE), bracing principles, home exercise prescription, and core stabilization strategies.

Course Structure

Level 1 is delivered as a six-day face-to-face course comprising 48 educational hours (8 hours per day). The program combines lectures, practical workshops, patient demonstrations, and supervised skill development, with practical training representing the majority of the course content.

To ensure a high level of interaction, supervision, and individual feedback, enrolment is limited to a maximum of 10 participants per course.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of Level 1, participants will be able to:

- Perform a comprehensive clinical and radiological assessment of patients with scoliosis and related spinal disorders.
- Classify patients according to the Rigo Concept Classification system.
- Establish an appropriate diagnosis, prognosis, and therapeutic plan.
- Apply the General and Specific Principles of the Rigo Concept BSPTS.
- Select and implement correction strategies appropriate to individual curve patterns.
- Develop individualized treatment programs based on clinical and radiological findings.
- Select appropriate unloading starting positions according to patient presentation and curve classification.
- Understand the role of volume control and hydro-pneumatic internal support mechanisms within corrective treatment.
- Construct effective three-dimensional corrective pathways based on the Principles of Correction.
- Facilitate patient self-correction towards the most functional, stable, and balanced three-dimensional alignment possible.

Educational Units

EU 1 – Introduction to the Rigo Concept

History and evolution of the Rigo Concept BSPTS, the biopsychosocial model of care, and the core spheres of knowledge underpinning treatment.

EU 2 – Physiotherapeutic Scoliosis-Specific Exercises (PSSE)

Definition of PSSE, SOSORT Clinical Practice Guidelines, and current scientific evidence supporting PSSE for juvenile, adolescent, and adult scoliosis.

EU 3 – Clinical and Radiological Assessment

Comprehensive clinical and radiological assessment, Rigo Concept Classification, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment planning, and practical radiological measurement workshops.

EU 4 – General and Specific Principles

Detailed exploration of the General Principles, Specific Principles, and predefined correction strategies used within the Rigo Concept BSPTS.

EU 5 – Starting Positions

Application of unloading starting positions and associated correction principles for the treatment of scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders.

EU 6 – Sagittal Plane Disorders

Pelvic parameters, Roussouly Classification, Scheuermann's disease, and the treatment of sagittal plane disorders using condition-specific corrective strategies.

EU 7 – Scoliosis

The three-dimensional nature of scoliosis, spinal torsion, natural history, etiopathogenesis, and factors influencing progression.

EU 8 – Integration into Activities of Daily Living

Strategies for incorporating corrective postures and self-correction principles into functional daily activities.

Assessment

Participant knowledge and competency are assessed through a written examination conducted at the conclusion of the course.

Progression to Level 2

To consolidate clinical skills and facilitate meaningful integration of the Level 1 material into practice, graduates are encouraged to work with the Level 1 concepts for a minimum of nine months before attending Level 2.

Level 2 should normally be completed within three years of successful completion of Level 1. Requests to attend Level 2 sooner than nine months after Level 1 may be considered on an individual basis by the Level 2 course Teacher.

In preparation for Level 2, participants are required to submit a Self-Guided Patient Case Review at least one month prior to course commencement. A template with slide-by-slide guidelines is provided following successful completion of Level 1.

The Patient Case Review provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their clinical application of the Rigo Concept, including patient assessment, treatment planning, outcomes achieved, challenges encountered, and key learning experiences.

LEVEL 2 PSSE

Advanced Correction Strategies, Exercise Progression, and Supervised Clinical Practice

Level 2 PSSE builds upon the foundations established in Level 1 and focuses on the refinement of clinical reasoning, corrective strategies, exercise progression, and advanced treatment application within the Rigo Concept BSPTS framework.

Delivered over six days (48 educational hours), the course is predominantly practical in nature, with approximately 70% of the program dedicated to hands-on learning, supervised patient interaction, and clinical application. Participants work directly with patients under the guidance of the Teacher while expanding their understanding of advanced corrective principles and treatment techniques.

A central focus of Level 2 is the development of greater specificity in treatment planning and execution. Participants learn to further individualize correction strategies, refine the corrective pathway according to patient presentation, and apply advanced exercise variations designed to enhance corrective effectiveness and functional integration.

The course introduces advanced pelvic correction strategies, progressive muscle activation techniques, and enhanced methods of achieving three-dimensional balance, alignment, and stability. Emphasis is placed on translating corrective exercises into efficient movement patterns that can be integrated into daily function and long-term patient self-management.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of Level 2, participants will be able to:

- Establish clinical and radiological diagnoses using the Rigo Concept Classification system.
- Apply the Principle of Specificity within treatment planning and exercise prescription.
- Develop advanced corrective pathways that incorporate individual patient characteristics and clinical presentation.
- Implement advanced pelvic correction strategies according to specific Clinical Types.
- Apply advanced muscle activation techniques to enhance corrective efficiency and treatment outcomes.
- Facilitate improved three-dimensional stability and functional integration of corrective postures.
- Select and implement advanced exercises and exercise variations appropriate to individual patient needs.
- Further develop clinical reasoning and treatment progression skills through supervised patient practice.

Educational Units

EU 1 – Review and Consolidation

Revision of the General Principles, Specific Principles, and predefined correction strategies associated with each Clinical Type within the Rigo Concept BSPTS.

EU 2 – The Principle of Specificity and Corrective Pathways

Detailed exploration of the Principle of Specificity, corrective pathway development, and the achievement of balance, alignment, and three-dimensional functional stability in patients with structural spinal disorders.

EU 3 – Scoliosis and Clinical Diagnosis

Advanced understanding of the three-dimensional nature of scoliosis, the influence of spinal torsion on pelvic mechanics, and the clinical and radiological application of the Rigo Concept Classification system.

EU 4 – Advanced Exercises

Introduction and application of advanced corrective exercises and exercise progressions based on Rigo Concept BSPTS treatment principles.

EU 5 – Muscle Activation Strategies

Understanding and application of Rigo Concept muscle activation techniques to optimize the interaction between external and internal support systems. Topics include stages of muscle activation, longitudinal tracing, and transversal tracing.

EU 6 – Functional Integration

Application of neuroplasticity and habituation principles to facilitate maintenance of the most stable, functional, and efficient three-dimensional alignment possible during activities of daily living.

EU 7 – Supervised Clinical Practice

Direct supervision of participants treating patients with scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders, allowing integration of Level 1 and Level 2 concepts within real clinical scenarios.

Assessment

Level 2 utilizes a continuous assessment model. Participants receive ongoing feedback, support, and evaluation throughout the course as they apply theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

The Teacher provides additional guidance and support to any participant requiring further clarification or skill development during the course and, where necessary, following course completion.

Access to Additional Educational Resources

Upon successful completion of Level 2, participants receive complimentary access to two comprehensive lectures presented by Dr Manuel Rigo:

- **Rigo Concept Bracing: Integrative Scoliosis Care Model**
- **Adult Spinal Deformity: Definition, Clinical and Radiological Aspects**

Progression to Level 3

Prior to attending Level 3, participants complete and submit two preparatory assignments:

1. Self-Guided Patient Case Review

Participants must submit an updated Patient Case Review. This may be a continuation of the case previously submitted for Level 2 entry or a new patient case.

The review should demonstrate ongoing clinical application of the Rigo Concept and include updated patient information, treatment progression, exercise development, and embedded video recordings demonstrating the participant's practical implementation of the exercises.

Review of these submissions enables the Level 3 Teacher to gain insight into each participant's current level of understanding and clinical application, facilitating a more individualized learning experience during the course.

2. Scientific Poster Presentation

Participants prepare a scientific poster, formatted according to conference presentation standards, based on a topic or clinical case of particular interest encountered within their practice.

Guidelines for both assignments are provided following successful completion of Level 2.

LEVEL 3 PSSE

Advanced Corrections, Full Corrective Pathways, Adult and Post-Surgical Management, Group Treatment Strategies, and Final Integration of Orthopedic and Rehabilitative Care

Level 3 PSSE represents the final stage of the Rigo Concept BSPTS Physiotherapeutic Scoliosis-Specific Exercise (PSSE) certification pathway. The course focuses on advanced corrections, construction of the full corrective pathway, application of the Rigo Concept in Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis (AIS), adult scoliosis, and post-surgical rehabilitation, together with strategies for the management of patients within small-group treatment settings.

The course also provides a final review and integration of orthopedic and rehabilitative treatment principles, reinforcing the multidisciplinary approach that underpins the Rigo Concept BSPTS methodology.

Delivered over six days (48 educational hours), Level 3 combines theoretical instruction with extensive practical application. Approximately 60% of the program is dedicated to practical learning, including direct patient treatment, supervised clinical problem-solving, and the application of advanced corrective strategies.

Level 3 emphasizes the integration of all concepts introduced throughout the certification pathway. Participants refine their ability to analyze complex presentations, construct complete corrective pathways, apply advanced correction techniques, and manage patients across a broad range of clinical scenarios, including adolescent and adult scoliosis, post-surgical rehabilitation, and complex structural spinal disorders.

As practical patient treatment forms a central component of the course, individuals with scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders participate in the program to facilitate supervised clinical learning and treatment application.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of Level 3, participants will be able to:

- Confirm and refine exercise starting positions according to the Rigo Concept Exercise Guidelines.
- Construct and apply a complete corrective pathway based on the Principles of the Rigo Concept BSPTS.
- Implement advanced correction techniques and corrective progressions.
- Apply advanced muscle activation strategies and utilize external support systems to optimize treatment outcomes.
- Identify and manage compensatory mechanisms commonly observed in adult scoliosis.
- Differentiate between Adult Degenerative (De Novo) Scoliosis and Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis in adults.
- Analyze the clinical and radiological characteristics associated with adult scoliosis.
- Understand contemporary surgical approaches and the role of PSSE before and after surgery.
- Collaborate effectively within a multidisciplinary team involved in scoliosis management.
- Understand the design principles, indications, and clinical application of Rigo Concept braces.
- Plan and deliver PSSE within both individual and group treatment environments.

Educational Units

EU 1 – Advanced Rigo Concept PSSE

Further development of the Principle of Specificity, confirmation of exercise starting positions, and refinement of postural correction through balance, alignment, and three-dimensional stability.

EU 2 – Advanced Rigo Correction

Advanced correction techniques, muscle activation strategies, tissue modelling concepts, regional tracing, full corrective pathway construction, and optimization of three-dimensional harmony between structural spinal disorders and compensatory regions.

EU 3 – Adult Scoliosis

Definition, classification, and management of adult structural spinal disorders, including Adult Degenerative (De Novo) Scoliosis and Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis in adults. Emphasis is placed on compensatory mechanisms and clinical decision-making.

EU 4 – Surgical Approaches and Rehabilitation

Overview of contemporary surgical management for scoliosis, including indications for surgery and the role of PSSE in pre-operative and post-operative rehabilitation.

EU 5 – Group Treatment Strategies

Development of practical strategies for the organization, management, and delivery of group-based treatment sessions for patients with scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders.

EU 6 – Orthopedic Treatment and the Rigo Concept Brace

Review of Rigo Concept brace designs, principles of orthopedic correction, clinical indications, and integration of bracing within a multidisciplinary treatment model.

Final Competency Assessment

Level 3 incorporates a comprehensive competency-based assessment process designed to confirm the participant's ability to apply the Rigo Concept BSPTS methodology safely and effectively in clinical practice.

Participants are assessed on their ability to:

- Demonstrate mastery of concepts and skills developed throughout Levels 1–3.
- Confirm and apply appropriate exercise starting positions according to the Level 3 exercise guidelines.
- Establish balance, alignment, and functional three-dimensional stability.
- Construct a complete scoliosis corrective pathway using the Principles of the Rigo Concept BSPTS.
- Achieve balance between body volumes and optimize three-dimensional harmony between structural and compensatory regions.
- Apply advanced muscle activation strategies and utilize asymmetric external support systems where appropriate.
- Demonstrate an understanding of tissue modelling principles, activation zones, and corrective tracing concepts.

Certification

Upon successful completion of Level 3 and the final competency assessment, participants are awarded certification in the Rigo Concept BSPTS Physiotherapeutic Scoliosis-Specific Exercise (PSSE) program.

Certification recognizes that the physiotherapist has successfully completed the full BSPTS educational pathway and has demonstrated the knowledge, clinical reasoning, and practical competencies required to participate as a trained member of the multidisciplinary team managing scoliosis and other structural spinal disorders using the Rigo Concept BSPTS methodology.