



ASST. PROF. DR. TINE KOVAČIČ

PROFILE

Asst. Prof. Dr. Tine Kovačič is an academic, clinician, and healthcare leader with extensive experience in higher education, clinical practice, research, and professional advocacy. He currently serves as Assistant Professor at Alma Mater Europaea University and previously held an academic appointment at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ljubljana and the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Primorska. His experience spans both public and private higher education institutions. In the public healthcare sector, he serves as Head of the Organisational Unit for Healthcare Services, overseeing the Medical Rehabilitation Department and the Nursing Care Department. Previously, he served as Head of the MSc and PhD Physiotherapy Study Programmes at Alma Mater Europaea. Dr. Kovačič has devoted almost 25 years to working with children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and Special Olympics athletes. He serves as National Clinical Director of the Healthy Athletes Programme – FUNfitness in Special Olympics Slovenia, Regional Clinical Advisor for Special Olympics Europe Eurasia, and a member of the FUNfitness Global Advisory Panel of Special Olympics International. In these international leadership roles, he has contributed to the development of the global physiotherapy workforce through Train-the-Trainer programmes and mentorship of physiotherapists and Clinical Directors from diverse healthcare and educational settings across Europe, India, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Since 2019, he has served as President of the Slovenian Association of Physiotherapists and currently holds additional responsibilities as Head of Public Regulatory Functions. He is a member of the Education and Research Working Group of the Europe Region of World Physiotherapy and contributes to international collaboration through World Physiotherapy, ENPHE, and Erasmus+ initiatives. He has lectured extensively at national and international conferences and has authored numerous scientific publications. His research interests include neurophysiotherapy, inclusive health, sports physiotherapy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and exercise interventions aimed at promoting healthy ageing and preventing sarcopenia in vulnerable populations. Throughout his career, Dr. Kovačič has been committed to bridging clinical practice, research, education, and professional leadership. He is particularly passionate about strengthening evidence-informed physiotherapy education, fostering international collaboration, and promoting equitable access to rehabilitation and health services for vulnerable populations.

CONTACT

☎ ++386 31 336 478

✉ tine.kovacic@siol.net

📍 Zvezna 4, 3000 Celje

EDUCATION

1997 - 2001

FACULTY FOR HEALTH SCIENCES-
UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

- BSc Physiotherapy

2001- 2003

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

- MSc in Physiotherapy

2014- 2019

AMEU ECM

- PhD Social Gerontology

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Research management
- Research Project Management
- Public Relations
- Teamwork/cooperative
- Time Management
- Leadership
- Effective Communication
- Critical Thinking

LANGUAGES

- English (Fluent)
- French (Basics)
- German (Basics)
- Croatian (Intermediate)
- Serbian (Intermediate)

WORK EXPERIENCE

- **Faculty for health sciences-University of Ljubljana-public university)** OCT. 2022 - SEPT. 2024 FOR 100%
Assistant professor and researcher
 - Develop and execute courses at 1st and 2nd Bologna level in PT (Neurophysiotherapy, Physiotherapy in rehabilitation and primary care), Evidence based Physiotherapy, Patokinesiology of trunk and upper extremity.
 - Lead research projects, educating, mentoring, and manage a high-performing PT students team, fostering a collaborative and results-driven work environment.
- **Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Primorska** MARCH. 2024 - CONTRACT-BASED
 - Assistant professor: lectures neurological physiotherapy
 - Mentoring undergraduate physiotherapy students in their bachelor's thesis projects
- **Alma Mater Europaea University** 2014 - 2020 for 20%; sept. 2020- sept.2022 for 100%; okt. 2024-till present for 50%
Assistant professor and researcher, senior lecturer, lecturer
 - Head of the PhD study program physiotherapy (research projects, pedagogical activities etc.) at AMEU ECM from 1.9.2020 -30.9.2022; from oct. 2024 onward vice-head
 - Head of the master program health of sciences (research projects, pedagogical activities etc.) at AMEU ECM from 1.9.2020 -30.9.2022; from oct. 2024 onward
 - (Evidence based physiotherapy, Applicative research project in physiotherapy)
 - lecturer, senior lecturer in Physiotherapy at AMEU ECM (Physiotherapy skills II, Sport activities for people with disabilities, Professional ethics)
 - Mentoring undergraduate physiotherapy students in their bachelor's thesis projects from oct. 2024 onward
 - Teaching courses in Professional Ethics from jan. 2026 onward
- **CUDV Dobrna** 2002 - 2020 for 100%; sept. 2023-sept. 2024 for 20%; oct.2024-till present for 50%
Head of medicine rehabilitation department 2009-2024
Head of the Organisational Unit for Healthcare Services (Medical Rehabilitation Department and Nursing Care Department) from okt. 2024
 - neurophysiotherapy in children, adolescents and adults with IDD, neurodevelopmental disorders
 - Main activities and responsibilities: Coordination work in work unit of CUDV Dobrna.
 - member of the Expert Panel in CUDV Dobrna. member of the Collegium of Business and Economy in CUDV Dobrna; member of expert teams in CUDV Dobrna; member of the Expert Council of the CUDV Dobrna
 - I was representative of workers in the Council of the CUDV Dobrna
 - I was Head physio assets of institutions for training and social care (CUDV Dobrna, CUDV Draga, CUDV Črna, CUDV Radovljica, ZUVD Dornava)
 - I was implementing all methods and techniques of neurophysiotherapy for habilitation or rehabilitation of children (NDT, PNF, respiratory physiotherapy, kinesiotherapy, electrotherapy, hydrotherapy, hippotherapy, through animal assisted therapy) for children with special needs.
 - I participated as a team member in special projects of CUDV Dobrna
 - I was leading a voluntary project with volunteers who work with users of CUDV Dobrna in the swimming pool (Spa Dobrna).
 - I was involved in organizing sports events and special training in CUDV Dobrna
 - I participated in the realization of our holidays with people with special needs in Debeli rtič, Šibenik, Izola, etc..
 - I organized and conducted special trainings according to Special Olympics (swimming in the swimming pool Golovec in Celje, sport trainings Alpine, Nordic and snowshoeing in Rogla and athletic exercises in the athletic stadium Klavdivar in Celje).
 - I participated in the competitions for athletes with disabilities in the Special Olympics at the local, national, European and world level.
 - I was involved in the research work, etc.

AWARDS



QUALIFICATIONS

2001-PRESENT

YOGA INSTRUCTOR, YOGA TEACHER:

- YOGA FOR HEALTHY SPINE
- YOGA COURSES IN YIDL SYSTEM 1-8 LEVEL

PERSONAL SKILLS

- Effective teamwork relies on a combination of personal skills that facilitate cooperation, communication, and mutual support. Here are some of my the most important personal skills for successful teamwork:
- Communication Skills:Active Listening: Paying full attention to others, understanding their points, and responding thoughtfully; Clear Expression: Conveying ideas and information clearly and concisely.
- Collaboration: Cooperation: Willingness to work with others and contribute to the team's goals.;Flexibility: Being open to new ideas and adaptable to changing situations.
- Interpersonal Skills: Empathy: Understanding and considering others' feelings and perspectives; Respect: Valuing and acknowledging the contributions and viewpoints of others.
- Conflict Resolution: Problem-Solving: Addressing disagreements constructively and finding mutually beneficial solutions.; Negotiation: Reaching agreements through discussion and compromise.
- Reliability:Responsibility: Completing tasks on time and meeting commitments; Accountability: Taking ownership of one's actions and their impact on the team.
- Positive Attitude:Enthusiasm: Showing genuine interest and a positive outlook towards the team's work; Supportiveness: Encouraging and motivating team members.
- Leadership:Decision-Making: Making informed decisions that benefit the team; Delegation: Assigning tasks effectively and trusting others to complete them.
- Self-Awareness:Understanding Strengths and Weaknesses: Knowing personal abilities and areas for improvement; Emotional Regulation: Managing emotions to remain calm and effective under pressure.
- Adaptability: Open-Mindedness: Being receptive to new ideas and feedback; Versatility: Adjusting to various roles and responsibilities as needed.
- Trust-Building: Honesty: Being truthful and transparent with team members; Consistency: Demonstrating reliability and steadiness in actions and decisions.
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- 2006: recognition of the Special Olympics Slovenia for the organization of the 3rd MATP National Games, Slovenia
- 2006: recognition of the bronze badge of the Association for Sports for the Disabled of Slovenia - Paralympic Coaching Committee
- 2009: recognition of the Special Olympics Slovenia for the organization of the 6th MATP National Games, Slovenia
- 2009: recognition of the bronze badge of the Association for Sports for the Disabled of Slovenia- Paralympic Committee for Coaching Achievements in Special Olympics Athletes at the
- 2009 Special Olympics World Games
- 2011: recognition of the bronze badge of the Association for the Sports of the Disabled of Slovenia- Paralympic Committee for coaching achievements in athletes of the Special Olympics at the World Games of the Special Olympics 2011
- 2012: plaque of the Special Olympics Slovenia - the highest recognition in the Republic of Slovenia for outstanding contribution to the development of the Special Olympics or. sport for people with moderate and severe developmental disabilities, Slovenia
- 2017: Silver award of the Professional Association of Physiotherapists for achievements in the field of physiotherapy, ZSF, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 2018: prestigious Golisano Health Leadership Award 2018, Special Olympics Health Award and Golisano Foundation, Washington, Special Olympics international (for my outstanding leadership in Special Olympics Slovenia health programming and my ongoing commitment to advancing inclusive health for people with intellectual disabilities)
- 2019: recognition of the Special Olympics of Slovenia dr. Tine Kovačič and physiotherapy students from AMEU ECM for organizing a health program for Special Olympics athletes
- 2023: recognition of the Special Olympics of Slovenia dr. Tine Kovačič and physiotherapy students from Faculty of Health Sciences for organizing a health program for Special Olympics athletes
- 2024:prestigious Golisano Health Leadership Award 2024, Special Olympics Health Award and Golisano Foundation

CONCISE DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT OR THE LAST RESEARCH PROJECTS:

- In 2025 and 2026, he led national Student Projects for Practical Experience and Knowledge Transfer (PUŠ), aimed at strengthening collaboration between higher education institutions and real-world practice environments while fostering experiential learning and student engagement in interdisciplinary healthcare settings.
- managing the project Renewing Ergonomic education for health care students in European HEIS (RENE); duration: 1.9.2019-31.8.2022 Erasmus +, KA2 strategic partnerships
- managing the project Health & academic performance with happy children (HAPHC); duration: 1.9.2020-30.9.2022 Erasmus +, KA2 strategic partnerships (funds 427,269.00 EUR)
- participation in the FroomCare project, co-financed by the EIT Health InnoStars RIS innovation program (Dr. Kovačič was in charge of academic, scientific and research support in the FroomCare project, in testing the FroomCare product within the AMEU-ECM institution, and involvement in FroomCare project activities for undergraduate and postgraduate students of AMEU till 30.9.2022)
- participation in the project HIERARCHICAL DESIGN AND FINANCING OF THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF SMART SILVER VILLAGES (L7-3188 (C) from ARRS evidence); duration of Tine Kovačič participation in the project:1.10.2021 - 30.09.2022
- managing research project within the doctoral research INFLUENCE OF MOTIONAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISORDERS INCLUDED IN THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS SLOVENIA: with which we studied affect the quality of life of adults with intellectual disabilities involved in three different Special Olympics programs? Muscle strength, physical mobility, static and dynamic balance and aerobic performance have a statistically significant impact on the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities who are involved in various movement programs of the Special Olympics.With the findings of the doctoral dissertation we contribute to the substantiation of the wider importance of physical activity programs of the Special Olympics Slovenia in improving the quality of life, life satisfaction and individual components of physical fitness of adults with intellectual disabilities. We also proposed a new model of inclusive health for aging adults with intellectual disabilities (by integrating a regression model of the impact of fitness on the quality of life of adults with intellectual disabilities into a modified and supplemented model of the ICF International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), complex interdisciplinary treatment and evaluation of vulnerable populations with intellectual disabilities who face a complex multidimensional problem of reduced capacity, functioning and health in the aging process.
- Training for the implementation of therapies and activities with the help of a horse in the field of work with special needs KA1-SE-29 / 17
- Mobility project of (pre) school staff (KA101) (duration: 10. 2017-1. 2019) Erasmus + no. 17-101-035472 (funds 8,125.00 eur)
- participation (pedagogical mentor) in the AMEU ECM project How to enable a young person with cerebral palsy to transition from neurophysiotherapy to fitness exercise (FizioFitnes) within the JR PKP 2018. -participation (pedagogical mentor) in the AMEU ECM project »s reduced muscle tone and hypermobility of joints in infants predisposing to problems with the spine and other major joints in the later period (HappyHipo) within the JR PKP 2018.
- participation (pedagogical mentor) in the AMEU ECM project Sensory integration and its impact on motor development, behavior and learning of the child in the 1st triad of the school - SENZIN within the JR PKP (On the creative path to knowledge) 2019.
- research project for sustainable development 2024: Using sensors, virtual reality and artificial intelligence in stroke rehabilitation
- internal research projects in the field of hipotherapy effectiveness on balance (stabilometry), neurophysiotherapy effectiveness in people with developmental disabilities, effectiveness of FUNfitness plus program in athletes with IDD
- Research work in progress: Impact of MATP on motor skills in children and adolescents with cerebral palsy: Pilot study using randomized control study design; Impact of hippotherapy on balance in children and adolescents with Down syndrome: Pilot study using randomized control study design, etc.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

SEE APPENDIX

LEADERSHIP AND WORK IN PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEES AT HOME AND ABROAD:

- FROM 2009-PRESENT: CLINICAL DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTHY ATHLETES PROGRAM FUN FITNESS IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS SLOVENIA
- FROM 2013 -PRESENT: REGIONAL CLINICAL ADVISOR FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTHY ATHLETES PROGRAM FUN FITNESS IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS EUROPE EURASIA REGION
- FROM 2023-PRESENT: MEMBER OF PHYSIOTHERAPY PROGRAM FUNFITNESS GLOBAL ADVISORY PANEL IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS INTERNATIONAL
- WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
- 2015-2022: MEMBER OF THE QUALITY COMMISSION, AMEU-ECM
- 2021-2022: MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION FOR PERMANENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SLOVENIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS.
- PRESIDENT OF SLOVENIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS FROM 2019 ETC.
- MEMBER OF WORKING GROUP EDUCATION AND RESEARCH EUROPEAN REGION WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY FROM SEPT. 2024 -2026
- FROM JUNE 2025 HEAD OF PUBLIC REGULATORY FUNCTIONS, SLOVENIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION
- FROM MARCH 2025 ONWARD ACTIVE CONTRIBUTOR TO INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING IN PHYSIOTHERAPY EDUCATION THROUGH ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN HIGHER EDUCATION (ENPHE) AND PARTICIPATION IN ERASMUS+ AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES.
- WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY MEMBER VALUE PROJECT STEERING GROUP FROM JAN. 2026

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ACTIVITIES:

- Sport coach of special Olympic athletes from 2002-2020:
- participation in the competitions/sport physiotherapy for athletes with disabilities in the Special Olympics at the local, national, European and world level (Special Olympics winter world games In Idaho 2009, South Korea 2013, Austria 2017; Special Olympics summer world games in Shanghai 2007, Athens 2011)
- participation in the sport training/sport physiotherapy for athletes with disabilities in the Special Olympics in athletics, skiing, swimming, cycling, and other motor activities training program for athletes with profound intellectual disability
- Head of 3rd national games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2005
- Head of 1st regional games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2006
- Head of 2nd regional games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2007
- Head of 6th national games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2008
- Project team leader for organization of 3rd national games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2005
- Project team leader for organization 1st regional games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2006
- Project team leader for organization 2nd regional games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2007
- Project team leader for organization 6th national games competition MATP (Special Olympics Slovenia) in 2008
- From 2002 onward I am coordinator for MATP program on regional level in Special olympics Slovenia
- From 2006 onward I am member of the Disciplinary Board in Special Olympics Slovenia, etc.
- From 2009-present clinical director of Special Olympics Healthy athletes program Fun fitness in Special Olympics Slovenia
- From 2013-present regional clinical advisor for Special Olympics Healthy athletes program Fun fitness in Special Olympics Europe Eurasia region
- 2nd mandate of president of the chairman of the supervisory board in Special olympics Slovenia from march 2026 onward

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION:

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:

- April 2026 Third International Congress of Physiotherapy in Kosovo
- march 2026 Scientific conference with international attendance Alma Mater Europaea University
- APTA Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) 2026, Anaheim, California, USA, 12-14 February 2026
- World Physiotherapy Congress 2025, Tokyo, Japan, 29-31 May 2025
- 14. 3. 2025 Scientific conference with international attendance Alma Mater Europaea University
- 50th Annual APTA Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) 2025, Houston, Texas, USA, 13-15 February 2025
- 7-9. 11. 2024 20. Slovenian physiotherapy congress
- 1.-2.6.2023 World Physiotherapy Congress in Dubai
- 20.-21.10.2022 19. Slovenian Physiotherapy Congress (Rogla)
- 9.-10.4.2021 World Physiotherapy Congress (World Physiotherapy, on-line)
- MARCH 2022 10. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM (online)
- MARCH 2021 9. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM (online)
- MARCH 2020 8. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM (online)
- 27.-28.9.2019 18. Slovenian Physiotherapy Congress (Laško)
- MARCH 2019 7. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM
- 10.-11.5.2019 World Physiotherapy Congress (World Physiotherapy, Geneva)
- MARCH 2018 6. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM
- MARCH 2017 5. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM
- MARCH 2016 4. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM
- MARCH 2015 3. Scientific conference with international attendance AMEU - ECM and many more....

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

(most important courses):

- 2025 -2026 Continuing Professional Development through participation in the APTA Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) 2025 and 2026.
- World Physiotherapy Congress 2025, Tokyo, Japan
- World Physiotherapy Congress 2023, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- 2023 advanced NDT baby course
- 2022 - DNS Basic course A
- 2021 PNF 1-2
- 2021 Advanced Bobath course
- 2012 basic NDT COURSE (400 hours)
- 2007 basic Bobath course for Adults 1st part
- 2008 Basic Bobath course for Adults 2nd part and others