

# **Applications for Systemic Training at the Institute of Family Therapy**

## **Dual Qualification and Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL) Policy**

### **Purpose and Scope**

This document sets out the policy and procedures for assessing and accrediting an applicant's learning and experience which does not meet the standard entry requirements. It does not deal with academic requirements (i.e for a first degree). Applicants who do not have a first degree should discuss this with the IFT Course Chair and / or the academic Programme Director for the course at Birkbeck College. It is for the University to decide whether a would-be applicant meets their academic requirements and / or how ability to work at the appropriate level might be demonstrated.

Section 1 sets out the background and context.

Section 2 of this policy discusses making an APEL claim for systemic knowledge, skills and experience. It deals with the procedures for demonstrating systemic knowledge and skills when the applicant has not completed an accredited systemic training course at Foundation and / or Intermediate level, as appropriate.

Section 3 of the policy deals with procedures for demonstrating equivalence of prior professional knowledge, skills and experience where the applicant does not hold a recognised prior professional qualification.

### **Section 1: Background and Rationale to Training Requirements**

#### **Background**

Systemic training at IFT is run in collaborative partnership with Birkbeck College, University of London. Birkbeck and IFT welcome enquiries from people from a variety of backgrounds, qualification and experience. We operate a policy of widening access to training and study, within the parameters of professional training requirements.

The Institute runs a four-year systemic training programme and its courses at each level are accredited with AFT (Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice), which sets the professional standards for training and practice.

Recent developments in the wider context of the NHS (**Agenda for Change**) and the Department of Health (**Mapping of Psychotherapies**) have required AFT to provide statements about training standards and equivalence. This has led AFT to review and extend its list of recognised first professional qualifications, while requiring greater clarity in the definition and

demonstration of equivalence to be taken into account when assessing candidates' suitability for training, particularly at Qualifying level.

### **Rationale to Training Requirements**

Systemic training is by tradition a second professional qualification. It assumes and, through the three levels of systemic training builds on, knowledge, skills and experience gained in pursuit of a relevant first professional qualification and its field of practice. Similarly, each level of systemic training is built on progression from the previous level and, beyond foundation level, assumes an increasing knowledge of systemic theory and practice skills.

AFT recognises that at Foundation and Intermediate levels many courses, including IFT's, operate a widening participation philosophy, and may accept applicants who do not have the required professional qualification, but who would find a Foundation / Intermediate training useful to their work.

In order to benefit from post-foundation level training, applicants wishing to enter training at Intermediate level must have completed a Foundation level course or be able to demonstrate how they meet the learning outcomes relevant to successful completion of Foundation Level.

Applicants for Advanced (Qualifying) Level training must have completed an AFT accredited Intermediate level training or its equivalent. Applicants who have not completed an AFT accredited Intermediate course will be expected to provide details of alternative training undertaken, and to demonstrate how they meet the learning outcomes relevant to successful completion of Intermediate Level. They should also hold a qualification in one of the following fields of practice recognised by AFT:

- Psychology – Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology and Counselling Psychology
- Social Work
- Psychiatry and other medical specialities
- Teaching – where individuals have had substantial experience of working with pupils and families in a counselling capacity
- Nursing – mental health nursing and other nursing specialities which require counselling skills
- Art, Drama, Dance and Movement, and Music Therapy if qualified and registered with the HPC
- Counselling – minimum three year minimum training, full BACP accredited membership and experience of the public or voluntary sector;
- Occupational Therapy – qualified and registered with HPC
- Speech and Language Therapy – qualified and registered with the HPC.

**All potential applicants should be aware that they may not be able to progress to the qualifying level of training, or be eligible for registration, unless further training is undertaken.**

In **exceptional** circumstances consideration may be given to applications from candidates who are able to provide evidence of knowledge, skills and experience regarding developmental psychology, adult and child mental health, working in and with public sector services, and managing risk.

On successful completion of qualifying level training, it is expected that applicants will be equipped with sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to practice effectively in a range of settings within the mental health and associated fields.

### **Entry Requirements:**

For clarity, the full entry requirements for each level are shown below.

#### **Foundation Level:**

1. A relevant professional training or equivalent;
2. An opportunity to apply systemic ideas to a current work setting.

#### **Intermediate Level:**

1. A relevant professional training or equivalent;
2. Successful completion of a foundation year in systemic practice or equivalent;
3. Opportunity to complete at least 60 hours of systemic practice in the twelve months leading to the end of the course.

#### **MSc / Advanced Level**

1. A relevant professional qualification or equivalent;
2. A first degree or evidence of ability to study at a postgraduate level;
3. Successful completion of foundation and intermediate years of training in systemic practice or equivalent.

#### **Academic Entry Requirements**

Applicants for the MSc course who do not hold a first degree will need to contact the Birkbeck Course Chair. Applicants will be required to demonstrate ability to study at post-graduate level.

The remainder of this document addresses the demonstration of professional and systemic entry requirements.

## **Section 2: Making an APEL Claim - Systemic Knowledge, Skills and Experience**

An APEL claim is the means by which an applicant is able to demonstrate how they have met the requirements and / or learning outcomes of the stage of learning of a more formally assessed

course or qualification. It is not a short-cut as it is up to the applicant to show how they meet the learning outcomes of the level of training they consider to have covered already.

An applicant wishing to claim APEL for Foundation level, in order to progress to Intermediate level training, or making a claim for Intermediate level in order to progress to Qualifying Level training is required to complete an **APEL Profile** and a **Statement of Equivalence** in addition to the standard course application form.

### 2.1 The APEL Profile

This documents your experience and learning and is a full account of any training you have received which used a systemic approach, as well as relevant practice.

Applicants are reminded that both Foundation and Intermediate level training have a minimum of 60 direct taught hours. In addition, Intermediate level includes 60 hours of verified systemic practice. Applicants are advised that in submitting a claim for equivalence of the 60 taught hours, at least 50% of their hours must be accounted for via training / direct taught events attended. The other hours may be based on independent reading and study, attendance at a reading group etc. Knowledge of the literature and models of systemic therapy must be demonstrated. Applicants at Intermediate level must have completed in full the 60 hours of systemic practice.

The APEL Profile is intended to allow the applicant space to elaborate on the information put forward in the application form.

Experience and Training: (show number of direct taught hours)	Learning:

### 2.2. APEL Statement of Equivalence

The APEL statement is linked directly to the AFT Learning Outcomes and consists of a brief statement against each outcome as to how the applicant meets it.

The APEL Statement / portfolio is therefore in lieu of the assessed work that a more formal course would have included.

The APEL documentation should be independently verified by someone who knows the applicant's work, e.g. line manager, supervisor.

### 2.2.1: Foundation Level : Equivalence to Learning Outcomes

This section should be completed by applicants for Intermediate level training who wish to claim APEL on the grounds that they meet the outcomes equivalent to successful completion of a Foundation level course.

#### Foundation Level Learning Outcomes

<b>Learning Outcomes:</b>	<b>How Applicant Meets Them:</b>
1. A basic understanding of the systemic approach to family and other relationships	
2. An ability to describe a range of systemic models and approaches and give examples of their application to practice.	
3. An ability to take a critical stance to ideas and their value.	
4. An ability to demonstrate a range of practice skills (e.g. through role play)	
5. An ability to describe and critique the concept of the family life cycle perspective and its application to different family forms.	
6. An ability to explore the implications of adherence to AFT's Code of Ethics and Practice for both individuals and organisations.	
7. An awareness of the impact of the wider social context, especially race, class, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability.	
8. A commitment to anti-discriminatory practice.	
9. A familiarity with a range of key literature relating to systemic practice.	
10. A basic familiarity with some aspects of research in the field, which should include an appreciation of the need for client feedback and service evaluation.	

11. An ability to begin to consider your own personal family and cultural experiences from a systemic perspective.	
12. An ability to place the development of family therapy into a historical perspective.	
13. An ability to explore and give an account of your own personal learning process over time..	

Signed:

Date:

Verified by:

Date:

Position / Relationship to Applicant:

### **2.2.2. Intermediate Level : Equivalence to Learning Outcomes**

This section should be completed by applicants for the MSc course who wish to claim APEL on the grounds that they have attained the learning outcomes equivalent to successful completion of an Intermediate Course

#### **Intermediate level Learning Outcomes**

<b>Learning Outcomes:</b>	<b>How Applicant Meets Them:</b>
1. Familiarity with a broad range of literature relating to family therapy and systemic practice, which should include more recent publications.	
2. An ability to evaluate theory critically and to explore ideas and their application to different families.	
3. An ability to describe differences and similarities between approaches in systemic therapy including theory of change.	
4. An ability to show a commitment to actively promote ethical, anti-discriminatory practice and to highlight and critique culturally-based assumptions.	

5. A familiarity with the AFT Code of Ethics and Practice and its implications for practice.	
6. A capacity to use the consultation process in relation to systemic practice.	
7. An ability to evaluate critically some areas of relevant research.	
8. Further development in your awareness of personal development processes, and an ability to begin to use them in self-reflexive ways in your practice.	
9. An ability to appropriately adapt skills and techniques to your won personal area of practice.	
10. An ability to discuss the impact of key legislative frameworks covering the three jurisdictions of children, mental health and community care on systemic practice.	
11. Knowledge of skills required in convening and engaging a range of client groups and working with them systemically.	
12. An ability to discuss systemic practice in both oral and written forms.	

Signed:

Date:

Verified by:

Date:

Position / Relationship to Applicant:

### 2.2.3. Clinical Practice Hours

These may be logged using the following format and should be signed and verified. An A4 overview / summary of hours and total should be included.

## Session Summary

Family Code / ID : ..... Length of Session: .....

Session No: ..... Date: .....

Working Hypothesis

Engagement Issues

Brief Content of Sessions

Themes Identified

**Interactional Patterns**

**Interventions**

**Theories that informed the session**

**Actions for wider systems**

**Reflections / Learning Points**

### Section 3: Dual Qualification

It is recognised that there will be some exceptions to the traditional routes to systemic training, and that some potential candidates for training have a qualification not recognised by AFT or otherwise bring exceptional knowledge, skills and experience.

Applicants who do not have recognised first / prior professional qualification (see list p.2), and who wish to claim equivalence should complete this section using the form below and submit it with their application form by. Applicants should complete the second column. The third column will be completed by the course in discussion with the applicant and will form the basis of any offer of a place.

Decisions will be made based on work settings and experience, taking into account the essential components of a prior professional qualification (see below) and how any shortfalls could be met.

Would-be applicants for Qualifying level training should bear in mind the demanding nature of training and study at this level, and may wish to consider how to address any shortfalls at an earlier stage.

#### Essential Components Statement

<b>Pre-training knowledge, skills and experience requirement</b>	<b>Candidates knowledge, skills and experience in each area</b>	<b>Requirements/ Recommendations to make up the shortfall/ supplement existing experience</b>
Developmental Psychology		
Mental Health issues in relation to adults		
Mental health issues in relation to children		
The public sector contexts including NHS, SS;  Experience of working in or with statutory services  Working in multi-disciplinary teams		
Managing risk		

Core professional issues; Confidentiality, ethics etc		
Context where the candidate can obtain experience outside of training placements NB the required 200 hours of systemic practice.		

#### **Section 4: Process and Procedures**

Would-be applicants for Intermediate and Qualifying level training may wish to discuss their position with the relevant Course Chair prior to submitting an application.

The appropriate forms (as above) according to the level of training and area of APEL claimed should be completed and submitted with the course application form and any relevant supporting documentation.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the information they wish to have taken into account is made available to the course. It will not be acceptable for an applicant to claim that a decision was reached based on incomplete information.

The applicant should make clear on the Application Form that they wish to be considered under the APEL Procedures.

No application will be considered without the simultaneous submission of the relevant APEL forms.

The application and APEL claim will be scrutinized and assessed by 2 members of the course staff, whose decision will be final.

Candidates whose APEL claims are not accepted will be given a reason/s for this.

An unsuccessful APEL claim does not preclude submission of a further claim for a subsequent course where the applicant has met the shortfalls identified in the meantime.

Acceptance of an APEL claim does not guarantee the offer of a place on the chosen course. Applicants will have to go through the usual entry procedures as any applicant.

## **Required Documentation**

### **Intermediate Level Application:**

Course Application Form  
APEL Profile  
APEL Statement of Equivalence (Foundation Level Learning Outcomes)

### **Qualifying Level Application:**

#### **If using APEL because no recognized intermediate training:**

Course Application Form  
APEL Profile  
APEL Statement of Equivalence (to Intermediate level Learning Outcomes)  
Clinical Practice Log: Session Summary  
A4 Overview / Summary of Clinical Hours

#### **If using APEL because no recognized prior professional qualification:**

Course Application Form  
APEL Profile  
Essential Components Statement

Any other such documentation that the applicant wishes to submit in support of their application.

IF the applicant has completed a non-accredited course, it will be helpful to submit information about the course, such as course handbook, course programme, trainers, details of assignments and assessments.

August 2009