

# MATTS Training Course Handbook

## Course Overview

MATTS is a STAT-approved professional training course for teachers of the Alexander Technique. It is made up of 1600 class hours and 800 hours of home study. STAT represents the great majority of teachers in the UK; and its affiliated societies abroad have similar training standards and are the principal professional bodies for teachers around the world. Graduates are certified by STAT and are then eligible to join the Society or any of its international affiliates as full Teaching Members.

Because we adhere to the core curriculum of the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), and graduate our students through the STAT Assessment Process (SAP), MATTS is one of only three STAT-approved teacher-training courses whose graduates are eligible immediately, and without any further study or examination (which is very onerous), to become members of the CNHC, which is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). This membership is required to obtain referrals from, or to work in, the NHS and is increasingly required for teachers wishing to work at colleges and other institutions.

Full-time training usually takes three years. However, many of our students choose to train part-time over a longer period.

The MATTS course, in common with other Alexander Technique (AT) teacher training courses, aims to assist the student on a path of integrated personal growth and development through applying the principles of the Technique in daily life, the fundamental basis for a career as a teacher of the Technique.

The course has an essentially practical orientation. Students learn through their own experience, in this way developing the self-knowledge needed to assist others to learn the Technique.

## Philosophy and Aims

Training as an Alexander Technique teacher (as well as working as an Alexander Teacher) is a balanced combination of a path of personal growth and vocational training.

**MATTS continues in a long tradition** of training courses pioneered by Alexander himself and further developed by some of his most notable successors. This approach is organised around the individual's own experience, insights and learning process. It adheres closely to traditional methods of training in refined skills where a clear and consistent emphasis on basic principles is seen as the true foundation of a sound training. This is because it is only once these basic principles are adequately understood, and can be applied consistently in the teaching situation, that each individual teacher has a basis from which to further explore and develop.

### **Individual approaches to teaching**

MATTS teachers are committed to exploring a wide variety of teaching methods and skills (within the context of a training rooted in principle) in order to support teachers to feel empowered to become the kind of teacher that works best for them.

### **A safe and supportive learning environment**

We aim to create an environment in which students and teachers feel secure enough to explore new ideas and experiences; to take the risks in thought and action that bring about true change, and to grow in the well-founded self-reliance needed to become an effective teacher.

In addition to the example set by MATTS teachers, students are encouraged intellectually to explore and understand the principles that create such an environment. For example, during the training there will be a series of interactive talks by two academic psychologists on the modern 'person-centred' philosophy of education and subjects such as ethics in teaching relationships will also be covered.

The primary aim of an AT lesson (and the larger part of the training consists of AT lessons in various forms), is to provide a student with the best possible opportunity to experience an improving manner of "Use", together with a greater understanding of how to employ the principles of the AT to bring this about, and this is most often experienced as very rewarding. However, at certain points in their training, most students will feel confused, lose confidence, or feel strongly challenged. We make every effort to see that students are given the space and support to work through

these periods at their own pace, supported by our care, constructive feedback and the celebration of their progress.

Our teachers and students are all very different individuals, and we regard that as a strength. And, whilst recognising the role of unconscious bias, we celebrate diversity and inclusivity and reject prejudice and discrimination of any kind.

### **The participation of all**

Everyone connected with the school (qualified teachers and trainees alike) is encouraged to take an active interest in, and responsibility for, the welfare of the school and the on-going development of the course.

Teachers on AT training courses serve more than they sometimes realise as personal examples or models of the profession for students.

Students on AT training courses are generally mature adults and are encouraged as such to take responsibility for their own regular attendance and their development (with the support of the teachers) into highly skilled, professional teachers of the Technique.

Although beginning students and experienced teachers necessarily work at very different levels of skill, everyone at MATTS is engaged in the study of the same underlying principles. each in our own way.

### **Key aims of the training**

The central aim of the MATTS course is the development of the trainee's own "manner of use", both in everyday life and in the teaching situation.

Professional training in the Alexander Technique is based not only on acquiring teaching skills, but on developing the self-awareness, judgement and practical understanding needed to apply the principles of the Technique consistently and responsibly.

The course aims to support trainees in becoming thoughtful, effective and ethically grounded teachers, capable of continuing their own development throughout their professional lives.

## **Post-graduate support**

Part of a thorough training is helping students to understand that being awarded a certificate is, in some ways, only the start of a continuing journey of growth in understanding and skill on which most people need support to succeed. All teachers, and most especially new teachers, can benefit from Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Isolation can lead to a loss of confidence and skills needed to build a successful practice.

We continue in the MATTS tradition of encouraging teachers to visit the school as often as they would like after graduation for a small, voluntary contribution towards overheads. Should the school close in the future, we expect to be able to continue to provide an environment, or see to it that an environment is created, designed to provide easily accessible, regular CPD support for teachers at a nominal cost.

## **Course structure and general outline**

### **Course dates and timetable**

The course dates and timetable can be found on [this page](#).

Principally through experience, but also through academic study, students are guided to an understanding of the basic theoretical principles of the Technique: Primary Movement/Primary Control, Unreliable Sensory Appreciation, Use affects Functioning, Psycho-Physical Unity, Inhibition and Direction, and the relationship between Means and Ends, including the practical and theoretical meaning of the terms 'means-whereby' and 'end-gaining'. An understanding of the 'force of habit', and of how the principles of the Technique can be applied systematically to overcome this, is at the core of the training.

Practical orientation - MATTS, in common with all Alexander Technique trainings, has an essentially practical orientation (80%) supplemented by lectures (20%) and self-study. Students learn principally through their own experience, growing in the self-knowledge needed to assist others to learn the Technique. Classes mainly comprise individual 'hands-on' mini-lessons ('turns'), directed activities ('games'), supervised hands-on practice in small groups to develop teaching skills ('groups') and series of lectures and readings ('talks').

## **Practical training**

**‘Turns’** – Assisting students to improve their own Use is the foundation and the indispensable part of any training as a teacher of the Alexander Technique. With a high ratio of teachers to students, and a high proportion of very experienced teachers, students are offered training well in excess of STAT minimum requirements, both in terms of quality and quantity.

**‘Games’** - Students are guided, through a series of ‘Games’ in the application of the principles of the Alexander Technique to everyday activities such as lifting and carrying, using a computer and mobile technology, climbing stairs, walking, running, the basics of saddle work, voice work, the Dart procedures and much more.

The training includes all of the core procedures used in the teaching of the Technique, often within the context of the daily ‘Game’. These include chair work, table work, ‘monkey’, walking, squatting, up on the toes, wall work, lunge, hands-on-back-of-chair and the whispered ‘ah’ and directing in “semi-supine”.

**‘Groups’** - Students undertake supervised hands-on work from the start. The central goal of all hands-on practice is to prioritise the individual student’s general manner of Use, this being carefully maintained while gradually undertaking, through a step-by-step programme under the guidance of an experienced teacher, increasingly demanding activities as required in the usual teaching procedures.

## **Academic and theoretical study**

**‘Talks’** - Most of the book readings, discussions in class and the private study of students, are aimed at an understanding of the principles and the use of the procedures outlined in Alexander’s books, on which the entire training is based. Daily readings and lectures are geared towards a growing knowledge of the books of Alexander and the history and principles of the AT. These are supplemented by readings and discussions based on other important books on the Technique.

Lecture courses include:

- basic anatomy and physiology
- an overview of current research on the Alexander Technique
- education and professional practice, including ethics, educational theory, performing arts pedagogy and science-based studies in human potential

- basic neuroscience, especially in relation to pain
- training in 'red flag' recognition, common relevant medical conditions, professional limits and appropriate referral

In addition, the course encourages an open and informed engagement with contemporary research across related disciplines.

**Homework** - trainees are required to complete at least 8 hours of home study each week (*pro rata* for part-time students), including:

- the application of the Technique to daily activities
- practising semi-supine
- reading the books on the reading list
- keeping a reflective diary (students are given guidance and support in how to do this)
- reviewing academic modules and special topic preparation.

MATTS has a large collection of videos to support students with academic homework.

Later in training, homework includes the preparation of public talks and courses on the AT and the careful reading of the STAT Code of Professional Conduct and Professional Competence and other STAT policies.

### **Stages of training**

- **Year 1** - Training focuses on individual trainee's learning, to improve his or her own self-awareness and manner of Use, an indispensable pre-requisite for teaching an improved use of the self to others. One-to-one "turns" (mini-lessons) are the basis of the practical training, together with work in small groups. Alongside this, there is study of the written works of F M Alexander and other related literature.
- **Year 2** - The second year focuses more on learning to maintain one's own self-awareness and poise under supervision while working with others and on developing the refined manual skills and procedures used in teaching the Alexander Technique. Considerable class hours are required to develop in the trainee the acute sensitivity of hand contact required. There is further study of related topics to give the trainees sufficient knowledge to understand the intellectual and scientific concepts underlying the work.
- **Year 3** - The final year focuses on the practical aspects of Alexander teaching. The trainee progresses from practising with colleagues to supervised practice

with people from outside the course. The habits of disciplined self-awareness developed in the first two years are put to the test in this situation, as the trainees gradually learn how to maintain a satisfactory standard in the use of themselves as they work with others so as to have the sensitivity required to help a new student. Development of verbal teaching instruction and presentational skills are also included, and there is some study of the psychological and ethical aspects of both learning and teaching the Alexander Technique. Trainees are given some guidance in the practical skills required to manage their own teaching practice.

### **Preparation for teaching**

As part of the training there will be a review of the STAT professional codes of conduct and competence and some formal guidance on working with individuals and groups and building and managing a successful practice.

In their final year, students are offered opportunities to sit in on and, when ready, assist with group adult education classes and public talks. There are many such courses and talks in the area each year offered by regular MATTS teachers. In addition, on request, final term students are offered opportunities to shadow local teachers in their private teaching.

### **Curricula for STAT-Approved and CNHC-Registered Training Courses**

This is a draft curriculum for STAT approved training courses. Although this document is still a "working draft", and not yet formally adopted by STAT, it gives a clear overview of what to expect on a STAT training course for teachers.

The CNHC Alexander Technique Core Curriculum, outlines what to expect on a AT teacher training that is registered with the CNHC. MATTS is one of the three STAT-approved courses currently registered with the CNHC, see below under 'Assessment and Qualifications', in the 'Qualifications' section.

## **Admission Criteria**

There are no formal entry requirements but candidates should generally be capable of participating responsibly and constructively in their training.

Candidates need to be:

- In sufficiently good health to be able to participate (with reasonable allowances) in the training
- Of good enough character to be able to work well with other people in an intensive environment
- To possess the personal and social skills required of a professional teacher of the AT
- Be sufficiently educated to be able to make adequate use (allowing for some assistance) of the more theoretical and philosophical aspects of the training and of the Technique.

In addition,

- A reasonable course of instruction in the Alexander Technique on the basis of individual lessons and/or training class visits is presumed. However the Alexander Technique, and the principles upon which it is based, are fundamental to *all* activities and almost any form of previous training or experience can be an advantage.
- Prospective students need to demonstrate a compelling interest in deepening their understanding of the Alexander Technique. Our work is at least as much a vocation as a profession; neither students nor qualified teachers are likely to succeed without such an interest.
- Prospective students need to demonstrate a compelling interest in their own personal development. Change is often profoundly challenging, and it unlikely to be consistently undertaken by those who do not have a strong desire to grow.
- Candidates must be aged at least 18 years and it is generally acknowledged that those over 21 years with some life experience are more suited to this training. There is no upper limit on the age of candidates so long as they are in good general health.
- Entry requires the completion of an Application Form and an interview with the Course Director, the Director Emeritus and the Assistant Director. This includes 'hands-on' working as in a typical Alexander lesson. These are usually waived for frequent visitors who we have come to know well.
- Students are required to become Student Members of STAT (see below).
- All students are initially accepted on to the MATTS course on a probationary basis.

Prospective candidates are strongly encouraged to visit the school on several occasions before applying.

### **STAT Student Membership**

On commencement of their course, students must become 'Student Members' of STAT and agree to be bound by its rules. In particular, students entering the training course must agree not to teach the Alexander Technique except under the supervision of the Head of Training, nor hold themselves out as teachers of the Alexander Technique until they have been formally Assessed by a panel appointed by STAT (see section 'Assessment and Qualification' below) and invited to join the Society as Teaching Members.

Student Members receive regular mailings (including Statnews and the STAT Journal) and are encouraged to attend the Annual Conference and to participate in the Student Network Programme. Membership includes two formal Moderation (external supportive assessments and advice) sessions (at about 2/3rds of the way through the training and near the end of the training) with our course Moderator, Dorothea Magonet, and other support from our Moderator if needed during the training. (Pete Robinson will be taking over the role of Moderator for students that have not yet had a first Moderation in early 2026). Student Membership also includes insurance cover for taking practice students near the end of training (for details on this, see 'Insurance' in the STAT Resources section of the Resources page), a discount of £100 on the cost of 'Final Assessment' (£209 rather than £309) and a free first year of teaching membership (£309 in 2025) after qualification. There is more detailed information on Moderation and Assessment in the section 'Assessment and Qualification' below.

A membership fee is charged by the Society of Teachers (STAT) and is currently £100/year (2025/6). There is a list of the benefits of Membership and information on how to apply near the bottom of this page on the STAT website.

A summary of the STAT rules for training courses can be found on the STAT website here. The benefits of a STAT-approved training course are listed on the STAT website here.

### **Completing your training at MATTS**

We make an informal commitment to new students to support the completion of their training and, having agreed to train a student, we will do our best to honour this commitment.

As with all small professional trainings, long-term continuation depends partly on ongoing student demand. However, MATTS benefits from a large and collaborative teaching community in Greater Manchester, and we expect students would be able to complete their training without interruption even in the unlikely event of major changes to the structure of the course.

Should circumstances ever require it, we would work closely with students and other training courses to ensure appropriate continuity of training.

## Course Fees

Full-time course fees are £7,920 per year (from October 2025) in three termly instalments of £2,640 or six half-termly instalments of £1,320, usually payable at the start of each term or half term. Where fees are increased over the course of the three year training, this will usually be by no more than the rate of inflation. Students who would prefer not to commit to a regular full-time training schedule can pay at the rate of £66/class (from October 2025) (see Part-Time Training below).

MATTS provides a very much higher teacher-student ratio than most training courses (averaging better than 2:1 over the past 5 years) and has an exceptionally high proportion of very experienced teachers. In addition, we comfortably exceed the minimum required hours of training each year and classes and workshops led by visiting notable teachers are included in the course fees. Sundry costs, such as catering, are also included.

## Part-Time Training

Full-time training normally takes three years. However, nowadays many students choose to train part-time, and MATTS offers students an unrivalled flexibility in training options. Students can choose to attend classes *on a completely flexible basis*, without providing any notice of which classes they will attend. We recommend (but do not require) that students attend for a minimum average of 50% of classes (2 class per week) in any year (36 weeks). In our experience, regularity and intensity of

training are an important part of the process of reaching the level of skill required to teach the Technique, especially in the final year of training. However, we still welcome students who are only able to train at a slower rate.

Students who would prefer not to commit to a regular full-time training schedule pay at the rate of £66/class (from October 2025), payable either weekly or at the end of each half term as the student prefers. This is a higher rate than full-time training (20% *pro rata*), intended to cover some of the extra costs to the training course of being unable to plan reliably for the number of students that will attend each day, and therefore the number of teachers that will be required to ensure a good teacher-student ratio. However, since it is not uncommon for full-time students to miss at least some training days, while still being required to pay the full-time rate, it is expected that any additional cost of training incurred by most part-time students will be, in practice, very small.

## Moderations, Assessment and Qualification

There is an ongoing informal assessment of each trainee jointly by the Director, the Assistant Director and the Moderator (see below) in consultation with other regular teachers. They consider the students' growth and development, particularly with regard to Alexander Technique skills and understanding through daily hands-on work (one-to-one and group work) and discussion.

The course is based on attendance of 1600 class hours over a minimum of three years and home study. Although it is expected that most students will complete their training successfully after three years of full-time training, or the equivalent in part-time training, acceptance on to the course in no way implies automatic qualification. If a question arises over a student's readiness to qualify, then he or she will be informed as soon as this becomes clear and is usually encouraged to complete extra training on payment of the usual fees. Where this does occur, it is usually not through any fault of the student, as we each have our own individual problems to solve, and it should be noted that some of the most valued teachers of the AT needed to extend their training.

It is a condition of the training that trainees must undertake not to present themselves as teachers of the Technique, nor teach the Technique except under approved supervision, until they have qualified from the course and have been certified by STAT through a process of formal Assessment.

## **STAT Moderation**

Moderation is an opportunity for each student and their Head of Training to have independent feedback and support from the STAT moderator, a senior teacher with experience of training. The role of the moderator is advisory and is intended to clarify for both Head of Training and the student whether the student is reaching the desired standard for their level of training. Full details of what to expect can be found in the [STAT Guide to Moderation for Students](#) (updated May 2025).

Students receive a first Moderation after about 1066 hours of training (two-thirds of a 1600 hour training) and a second Moderation after about 1425 hours of training (about 90% of a 1600 hour training). Our training course moderator is [Dorothea Magonet](#). Dorothea is a highly experienced and skilled teacher, with many years of experience as a STAT moderator. Moderation is not a 'test', in the negative meaning of the term, and is intended more as support and reliable external feedback, and includes a written report. Most students find their Moderations to be an interesting and rewarding experience.

## **STAT Assessment**

On completion of 1600 hours of training students may apply to STAT to be Assessed. The charge for Assessment is £309 (2026), discounted to £209 for STAT Student Members. In addition, STAT Student Members receive a free first year of STAT Teaching Membership (worth £309 in 2026) on successful completion of Assessment.

The Assessment process takes about one and a half hours, and involves an examination of the candidate's skills in five assessment criteria; work on self, observation & awareness, teaching skills, AT origins & key principles, and professional practice. The Assessment Panel is made up of three very experienced teachers, usually the Director or the Assistant Director of the training course, the Moderator of the training course or another senior teacher known to the student and an External Assessor appointed by STAT.

The latest version of the 'STAT Certification Assessment - A Guide for Applicants, July 2023', can be downloaded [here](#).

Students can expect our best advice on when to present themselves for Assessment. Although Assessment is an examination of a sort, it is carefully designed to a friendly process and it is expected that the great majority of candidates who are informed by

their trainers and Moderator that they are ready to be Assessed will be successful at their first attempt.

If a student does not pass Assessment, they will be offered detailed guidance from the Assessment Panel as to where further development in skills is most needed in order to meet the required standard. Students are free to re-present themselves for Assessment after a period of further study.

## Qualifications

Having passed formal Assessment, graduates are automatically entitled to join STAT as a Teaching Member (MSTAT). STAT is the oldest and by far the largest representative body of AT teachers and is affiliated with all of the largest AT professional bodies worldwide.

MATTS graduates are entitled (but not required) to join the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) at any time, which is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). Because MATTS adheres to the core curriculum and formal qualification requirements of these bodies, at the moment MATTS is one of only three teacher-training courses in the UK whose graduates are also eligible immediately, and without any further study or examination (which can be very onerous), to become members of the CNHC. This membership is increasingly required for teachers wishing to work at colleges and other institutions, is required to obtain referrals from, or to work in, the NHS and is required by some insurers paying for AT lessons.

## Reading List

The literature on the Alexander Technique is extensive. In addition to simple introductory books, there are many other books intended for special interest groups, such as musicians, actors, horse riders, runners, swimmers etc. as well as books intended for teachers of the Technique. Papers on the Technique have been published in many journals.

All of the most essential books are in the MATTS library, so you can have a look at them and borrow them from there if you wish. We also stock some new and used books for sale, usually at a large discount.

**If you plan to teach the Technique, you should own copies of Alexander's four books:**

Man's Supreme Inheritance (1918)

Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual (1923)

The Use of the Self (1932)

The Universal Constant in Living (1941)

With the exception of 'Use of the Self', the most recent editions of all these books are all available from [Mouritz](#), although used copies often become available at the school. The school makes occasional group orders from Mouritz save on P&P.

There are also summaries of these books available in book and digital formats that aim to bring out their central points in shorter form.

**Other Essential Books**

Westfeldt, Lulie F. Matthias Alexander: The Man and His Work (1964), Mouritz 1998

Binkley, Goddard The Expanding Self, STAT Books 1993

Carrington, W and Carey, S Explaining the Alexander Technique, Sheildrake Press 1992

Carrington, W Thinking Aloud, Mornum Time Press 1994

Carrington, W The Act of Living, Mornum Time Press 1999

Macdonald, Patrick The Alexander Technique as I See It (1989), Mouritz 2015

**Anatomy and Physiology**

A basic knowledge of human anatomy and physiology is expected of AT graduates. Some anatomy is taught as part of the course, but trainees are expected to increase their knowledge as part of their homework hours. Sallie's video course is available on the Member's area of this website [here](#) and Sallie is always available to answer questions. There are many good books on anatomy (including at least ten in our library) and we especially recommend 'Structure and Function' by John Hull Grundy, available from [Mouritz](#).

The recommended reading list on health education, educational psychology, etc. are given at appropriate times during the course. When possible, books will be available on loan to students from the MATTS Library and from course tutors.

Students are also required to become familiar over the course of their training with the various STAT Codes of Professional Conduct, linked on the [Members' Resources Page](#) under 'STAT resources', and to be familiar with the major [clinical studies](#) on the AT.

## Student Support and Feedback

As described above (Philosophy and Aims), a foundational aim of the course is the creation of a supportive and safe learning environment.

As such, on an ongoing basis, students benefit from support and feedback from the regular teachers, visiting teachers and the other students. In particular:

- Student well-being is informally monitored by the regular teaching staff (and discussed as necessary and as part of teachers' meetings (see below)).
- Students have the support of the Moderator.
- The course Director arranges an informal meeting with each student once each training year to check that all is well, and at any other time on request.
- Students are also encouraged to meet with a second teacher of their choice once each term.

Students are given guidance and support in the maintenance of a reflective diary of their training to clarify and enhance their learning, and as an aid to self-assessment. Students are given the opportunity to review their use of their diary individually with the module tutor.

Students are encouraged to join the STAT student network and to continue to visit the school after graduation (see above, in the 'Philosophy and Aims' section, 'Postgraduate Support').

### **Feedback**

As part of usual good practice to improve training, we regularly seek feedback from the students on their experience of the teaching and other aspects of the running of the school. As such, we actively encourage ongoing feedback and provide an annual opportunity for students to provide anonymously their comments and suggestions. Teachers are also encouraged to provide feedback with a view to constant improvement of the training experience.

There are regular meetings of the MATTS teachers to allow us to share our experiences, plan the training on an ongoing basis and to discuss progress of the students. Teachers are also encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions. In this way we hope to detect problems early and to make further improvements in the running of the school.

In line with current STAT Training Course Practice (section 18), students are invited to use a feedback form based on the STAT template during and on completion of their training and to nominate a student representative.

### **Formal questions or complaints**

Any questions or complaints presented in writing by a student concerning administration, training or the student's progress will be answered clearly by the course director within two weeks. The request will be handled confidentially. The questions or complaints will be filed until the student's qualification.

If students have any complaints about the course which they cannot resolve with the course director, they may contact the independent course Moderator, who will endeavour to address the request within three weeks.

If the complaint still cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the student will then be invited to make use of the STAT Students' Conciliation and Disputes Procedure.

## **Staff Development and CPD**

All of our regular teaching staff have a long-standing commitment to continuing professional development. The goal of all the classes, and of the Thursday Class in particular, is at least as much the development of established teachers as the training of new teachers, as the two are inextricably linked in all practical teaching of the Alexander Technique.

All teachers are encouraged and supported to participate actively, according to their interests, abilities and confidence, in the day to day running of the class; to give 'turns', to demonstrate 'games', to take hands-on groups and to present talks.

It is our intention that MATTS should continue to provide a centre for excellence and CPD for Greater Manchester and the entire north of England. As well as drawing on our own very considerable pool of talent and experience, occasional visits by notable teachers from outside the area provide further opportunities for learning.

## Endnotes

Please note this information is provided for general guidance only. The course content and structure remain under ongoing review and may be revised in response to educational needs and developments in training practice. In addition, students who do not attend on all course days may miss some content and this may not always be repeated during the course of their training.

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