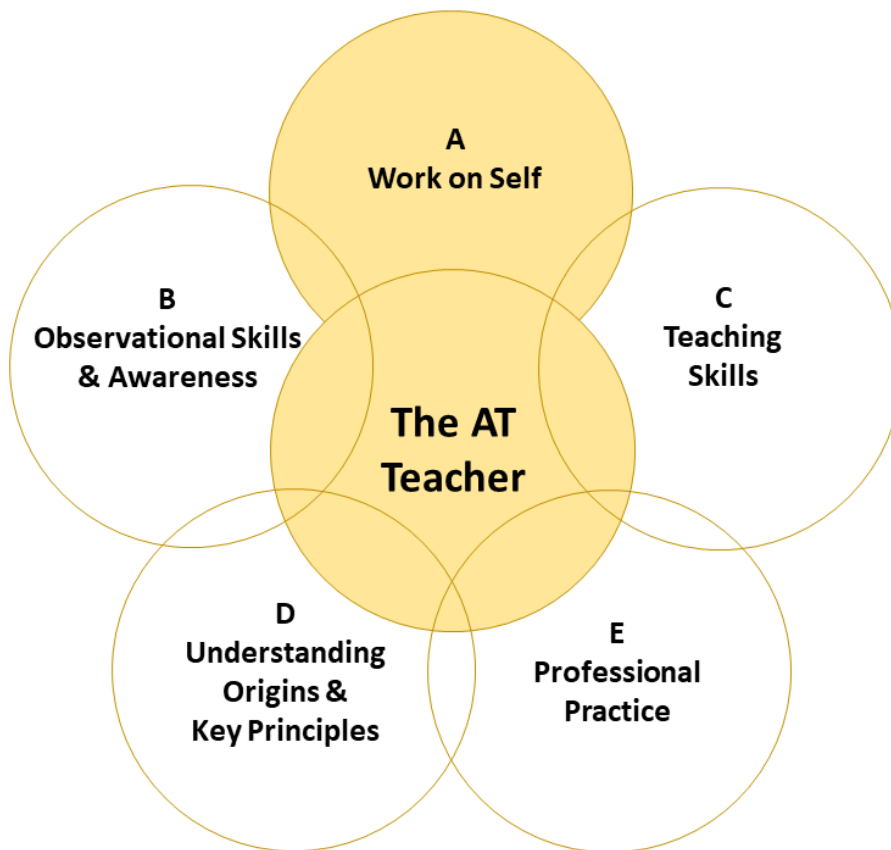




CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT A Guide for Applicants



The purpose of the Certification Assessment is to evaluate whether trainees are ready to begin independent teaching safely and effectively as STAT-Certified teachers.

The **STAT Assessment Procedure (SAP)** sets out what is being evaluated and how the process is structured. This **Guide for Applicants (CGA1)** stands alongside it, explaining how to apply for your Certification Assessment and providing practical suggestions to help you familiarise yourself with its ‘means-whereby’.

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1 Introduction

Organisations wishing to employ Alexander Technique teachers (or to include them in what they offer to the public) increasingly require external evidence that the teacher's readiness to practise has been systematically evaluated beyond the confines of their own training course. The STAT Assessment Procedure (SAP) provides the means whereby STAT can meet this need, strengthening public confidence in STAT-endorsed Alexander Technique teaching. At the same time, as you make the transition from trainee to professional teacher, assessment is designed to give you extra confidence in your ability to teach independently because that ability has been externally verified.

That said, we recognise that the idea of 'assessment' can be troubling for some, perhaps reviving uncomfortable memories of taking exams or being required to 'perform' in one setting or another. So it is worth taking a step back and looking at what is really involved in a STAT assessment. The word 'assessment' itself can be traced back to the Latin *adsedere* meaning 'to sit together', indicating a dialogue, an exchange, looking at something in the round. As we all experience, teaching the AT requires an ability to use our whole psychophysical self to do something quite complex. The assessment procedure is a means whereby both applicant and assessment panel can determine whether the applicant is ready to work safely and effectively at that degree of complexity outside of the familiar context of day to day training.

In the course of your assessment, you will be asked to teach a simple lesson to a volunteer student¹ you have chosen yourself, to work briefly with an experienced teacher's hands on you (and vice versa), and to discuss with them your thoughts on aspects of professional practice and AT principles. You will become accustomed to doing all of this during your training, so you can be confident that the AT training you are receiving will provide you with all that you need for your assessment as well as for embarking on your lifelong journey of AT exploration and learning post-qualification.

The only difference on the day is that one of the experienced teacher assessors you will be working with will be unfamiliar to you. Both have been fully trained in leading assessments and they will take you through the process as set out in the SAP (see SAP section 7) so there will be no surprises to contend with. The relationship between the assessors and the applicant on the day may feel a little different from that of teacher to trainee. The assessors may seem a little more distant, for example, as they have lots of things to attend to: following the procedure faithfully, observing, keeping to time and taking notes so they can discuss things with your Training Course Representative (normally your Head of Training) afterwards. Although the context is different, you can be sure that their approach retains the same Alexander quality of open-mindedness without fixed ideas about a single 'right' way of teaching or explaining the AT. The assessment is an exploration of a potential teacher's approach at the start of their professional life rather than a test involving right or wrong answers.

During the assessment, whatever is being assessed (for example, your work on self, observational skills and awareness, teaching skills, understanding of the origins and key principles, professional practice), the assessors are simply considering whether in that regard you are ready to **begin** taking your learning into independent teaching. They are not expecting

¹ Throughout this guide, 'student' refers to a member of the public learning the Alexander Technique from an AT teacher; 'trainee' is used to indicate someone training to become a STAT-Certified teacher of the AT.

you to have the more assured skills and confidence that only come with experience and a period in professional practice.

The decision about your readiness will be reached **collectively** through discussion between the two assessors on the day and your Training Course Representative. Each is able to contribute a different perspective as outlined in the next section and together they form the Assessment Panel.

2 Assessment Panel

The Assessment Panel will consist of three people: your Training Course Representative, an External Assessor, and an Independent External Assessor.

Training Course Representative

In the course of your 1600-hour training, you will already have received continuous informal assessment and feedback by your Head of Training and their team, supported by appraisal of your progress at intervals by a STAT-approved Moderator.

Assessment of this kind over an extended period is invaluable in determining your potential for continued learning and development over time and, towards the end of your training, your readiness to practise as shown day to day in the familiar context of the training course. It is captured for your assessment in a written Training Course Report prepared beforehand by your Training Course Representative (normally the Head of Training or their Named Assistant). For each of the AT assessment criteria (work on self, observation & awareness, teaching skills, AT origins and key principles, professional practice), the Training Course Representative is asked to describe briefly how you have developed and grown during your training, and to indicate their view of your current readiness to begin teaching independently.

At the end of your assessment on the day (in which the Training Course Representative does not take part), the assessors spend some time reading the Training Course Report while the Training Course Representative reads the summary that each assessor has made of their observations that day. Through discussion, the panel will then reach a collective decision as to the outcome of the assessment.

External Assessor

It is the External Assessor and the Independent External Assessor you will be working with on the day. The External Assessor is chosen by your Head of Training who will select someone likely known to you but not directly involved in your day-to-day training. A regular visiting teacher or the course Moderator may take this role, for example. The role of both assessors is the same but each has a different perspective to contribute. The External Assessor helps provide context and balance from their prior knowledge of course practice and previous experience of how you are able to work without the additional stimulus of being formally observed.

Both assessors take notes during your assessment. At the end of it, they use these notes to complete an individual summary of their observations on each of the assessment criteria. To aid subsequent discussion, this provides an indication of where each one would place you on the spectrum of readiness for STAT Certification and captures their reasons. Your Training Course Representative reads these summaries while the assessors read their Training Course Report.

Independent External Assessor

With the agreement of your Head of Training, STAT's Assessment Coordinators select another assessor to act as the Independent External Assessor. This will be someone who has had no involvement – professional or personal – with you during your training or previously, in order to

fulfil the requirement for external verification of your readiness to practise independently as an Alexander teacher. The Independent External Assessor takes the lead during the assessment on the day and will chair the Panel discussion afterwards.

Reaching a collective decision

The panel is required to come to a **collective** decision through discussion rather than a decision based on majority vote. By reviewing and discussing the Training Course Report and the individual assessor summaries together, the panel reaches and records a collective decision on the extent to which the applicant has shown the necessary readiness to teach independently in each of the assessment criteria and overall.

3 Applying for assessment

Timing

The assessment cannot take place until you are within 3 weeks of completing your required 1600 training course class hours.

However, to allow sufficient time for an appropriate Assessment Panel to be formed and the necessary arrangements made, the application for assessment should be made at the end of the term **preceding** your final term (or not less than 12 weeks before completion if you will be qualifying mid-term). You will be asked to confirm the booked assessment 6 weeks before it is due to take place so that the Panel can make economical travel arrangements. If it becomes necessary, you may still withdraw from the booked assessment later, but please be aware that, unless the circumstances are exceptional (e.g. bereavement, serious illness/injury), you may be asked to cover any abortive travel costs incurred by the assessors.

Form

Application for assessment is made via your Training Course, using the Certification Assessment Application Form (**CApp1**) available from stat@alexandertechnique.co.uk. This must be completed jointly by you and your Training Course Representative in full before being sent to the STAT Office by email to: stat@alexandertechnique.co.uk putting “**Assessment Application**” in the ‘Subject’ line.

NB. You must be a Student Member of STAT in good standing (i.e. with no current or past STAT membership fees or other charges outstanding) before your application can be considered.

Assessment Fee

The assessment fee is payable on invoice following your application for assessment and must be paid before the assessment takes place. **Successful applicants will receive their first full year of Teaching Membership free of charge.** For the current fee rate, please email stat@alexandertechnique.co.uk putting “**Assessment Fees**” in the ‘Subject’ line.

Appointment of Assessment Panel

On receipt, the form will be checked in the STAT Office and then passed to the Assessment Coordinators who will select the Independent External Assessor to Chair the Assessment Panel (and approve the External Assessor named on the form if not already approved).

They will take care to identify a Chair with the necessary experience to appreciate your training background and to avoid conflicts of interest. To that end, before approaching their chosen Independent External Assessor, they will check with the Training Course Representative (who will also check with you and the External Assessor) to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. In the unlikely event that one of you identifies a conflict or mismatch, your Training Course

Representative may exercise a veto on your behalf (see SAP section 5.3 for details) and the Assessment Coordinators will select a different Independent External Assessor.

Once an appropriate Independent External Assessor has agreed to act, the date of the assessment will then be agreed and communicated to all parties.

4 Arranging for a volunteer student

The first part of your assessment involves you giving a typical AT lesson (i.e. not a first or introductory lesson) to a member of the public while the assessors observe unobtrusively and without interrupting. **It is your responsibility to find a suitable volunteer for this purpose, to ensure they read, understand and sign the Volunteer Student Agreement (see Appendix 1 below), and to arrange for their attendance on the day.** Your Training Course Representative may advise or assist as needed.

Selecting a volunteer

In choosing your volunteer student, above all else you need to feel confident that they will turn up! The student must also be someone who has given clear and informed consent to you working 'hands-on' with them and should be someone with whom you feel comfortable working. You are looking to apply your teaching skills and you may find that easier if your volunteer is someone with whom you have a professional relationship rather than someone who is primarily a friend. A student you have taught as part of giving supervised lessons in your final year might be ideal, for example.

Briefing your volunteer and securing their commitment

It's a good idea to explore the possibility with your volunteer in good time so that they can get the date into their diary and have a good understanding of how important the assessment process is to you and what it will involve.

They need to understand that their sole responsibility is to be there and to engage with the 30-minute lesson. It would be understandable if they felt they wanted to "help" you in that situation so it's important for them to know that they don't have to put on any performance and you don't need to train them for the day. The more they can treat it as just another supervised lesson, the easier it will be for you.

Appendix 1 below contains a short information sheet for potential volunteers and also a Volunteer Agreement for you to print off. Asking your volunteer to sign the agreement ahead of time should help secure their commitment and ensure they have your contact details to hand in the event of an emergency. You might also like to consider the possibility of having a back-up volunteer whom you could call even at short notice if the worst happened and you had to find a last-minute substitute.

5 What to expect on the day

The assessment is structured to allow time for you to be observed working in a variety of ways and engaging with questions relating to that work. There will be a short comfort break in the middle. The assessors understand that being observed is a stimulus in itself and that it may take a little time for you to settle into your stride. They will be allowing for that throughout so please don't worry if it happens to you.

The assessment will proceed as follows:

Introductions

5-10 minutes

Before the assessment begins there is time for you to meet the assessors and ask any questions you may have about the process. They will start by introducing themselves and invite you to tell them a bit about your route into the Alexander Technique to introduce yourself. The Chair will invite you to say if there are any special circumstances that might affect your work that day and then ask you to confirm that you are ready to proceed.

Giving a lesson

30mins + 5 mins for assessor questions

This first section of the assessment involves you giving a 30-minute lesson to your volunteer student while both assessors observe unobtrusively and without interrupting. This gives them the opportunity to see how you are starting to bring all the various aspects of Alexander work together in your teaching: how you look after yourself, your awareness and observation, your approach to teaching AT principles using your hands combined with what you say, and the professional relationship that you establish with your student.

In giving any lesson, AT teachers need to meet the student's condition and learning needs as presented on the day. The observed lesson is no different in that respect. You are asked to include one or two traditional Alexander ways of working (such as chair work, table work, etc.) and, perhaps, another everyday activity (e.g. walking, reaching) in the lesson in a way that meets the needs of your student that day. For example, while you might normally expect to include 10-15 minutes of table work in your lesson, observing your student on the day may lead you to give more or less of the lesson on the table or to work in a different way altogether. It is up to you to decide how to organise and conduct the lesson according to your student's aptitude and needs, and to pace the lesson so that you can complete it, thank your student and show them out all within the 30 minutes. (Do check before you start that the room has been set up with a clock positioned where you can see it.)

The assessors will be looking at your ability to begin drawing on a range of approaches as appropriate to your student. Your hands-on teaching skills and ability to communicate key Alexander concepts to your student in words and encourage their active involvement are all important and should deliver a consistent and relevant message. (On a practical note, do make sure that the assessors can hear as well as see you.)

Once the student has left, the assessors may have a brief discussion with you about the lesson to add to or clarify what they have seen and heard. For example, they may ask you to talk about your own observations on how the student engaged with the work and how well you think they understood it.

Comfort break

10 mins

Applicant and assessors work together

20 mins

In this section, you will spend a short time working with each assessor.

During the first 10 minutes, you will be doing some basic chair work. You are asked to apply inhibition and direction in the act of sitting and standing, voicing out loud your thinking in the process and your observations. While you do this, one assessor follows you with a hand on while the other just observes. (Feel free to tell the assessor if there is anything they might need to know before putting their hands on, such as any injuries or type/area of hand contact you need them to avoid.)

The assessor with a hand on is not seeking to direct or guide you with their hands. The contact will be non-doing and non-judgemental. It is 'on receive', tuning in to you as you find or renew

your inhibition and direction while engaging in movement and balance. By asking you to voice your thinking and observations out loud, both assessors can get a sense of how you observe your own manner of use while paying attention to whatever is appropriate and maintaining a broad field of awareness.

The assessors then swap over and you are asked to work for the next 10 minutes with your hands on the assessor who was previously the observer. The assessor will ask you to work with them using a chair or on a table. Whichever it is, you choose where and how to use your hands and you should take the lead to initiate movement as appropriate. As you work, continue to monitor and be interested in (curious about) how you are using yourself, including how your breathing adapts and, if you can, share any observations you make about changes you notice in yourself or in the assessor as you work. Both assessors are seeking to understand how you work on yourself and the extent to which you provide (with your hand contact, voice and presence) conditions which foster coming to a quiet alert state.

Structured discussion

20 mins

Your assessment ends with a discussion framed around open questions on a number of topics. It's important to stress that the assessors **are not looking for rehearsed, model 'exam' answers to any of the questions they may put to you.** On the contrary, they want to explore your personal understanding of and approach to the topics discussed.

The Independent External Assessor will lead the discussion. It will cover the responsibilities of professional practice and your commitment to upholding high standards in this regard. In order to understand your readiness to begin teaching independently as a STAT-endorsed teacher, the assessors will explore with you some of the issues listed in section 6E of the SAP (p12) such as professional ethics and boundaries, the scope and limits of your role as an AT teacher and your duty of care. As part of this, you will also be asked how you are making plans for your continuing development post qualification. As we all know, teaching the AT requires a lifelong commitment to such learning and the assessors will be keen to know something of how you are thinking of continuing your development.

At some point in the discussion, you may also be invited to suggest how you might introduce a key Alexander principle in simple terms to a new student. (The assessors will have observed how you did this during the practical work earlier so may not feel the need to explore it further during the discussion. They aim to ensure that two or more of the key principles listed in section 6D of the SAP (pp11-12) have been explored in the course of the assessment as a whole.)

At the end of the discussion, if there is anything that you would have liked to say or ask earlier but didn't, feel free to do so now before leaving the room.

After you have left, the Panel will come together to reach and record a collective decision on the extent to which you have shown the necessary readiness to teach independently in each of the assessment criteria and overall. This is put to STAT Council as a recommendation that you are *either* "Ready to practise" *or* "Not ready to practise".

6 Outcome

Notification

Your Training Course Representative will tell you the immediate outcome of your assessment **informally**, once all assessments taking place that day have been completed. This will normally be either that you have been found "Ready to Practise", i.e. you are demonstrating the requisite AT skills, knowledge and understanding to begin independent teaching safely and effectively as a STAT Certified Teacher and Teaching Member of STAT, or that you are not yet considered

“Ready to Practise”. However, in the very exceptional circumstance that the Panel was unable to reach a collective decision, the immediate outcome would be the appointment of an Arbiter to reach a fair result for you (see Appendix 2, **If an Arbiter is needed**, below).

You will normally receive **formal** notification of the final outcome of your assessment in writing within six working days, once the Panel’s recommendation has been accepted by STAT Council. (If an Arbiter is needed, you will normally receive formal notification of the final outcome within two weeks of your assessment as described in Appendix 2 below).

If you have been found “Ready to Practise”

Your formal notification will include any constructive feedback made by the Panel. STAT Office will also be in touch with you about the preparation of your STAT Certificate and arrangements for taking up your complimentary Teaching Membership.

If you have not been found “Ready to Practise”

Your formal notification will include an outline of the areas requiring further learning and development and the Panel’s advice as to what form and duration of further training is recommended before applying for reassessment.

Reassessment normally involves the applicant repeating the whole assessment procedure. In exceptional circumstances where perhaps the applicant was considered to have crossed the threshold for independent teaching in most of the assessment criteria but didn’t quite reach it in a single category, the Panel may recommend that the applicant be asked to repeat only that part of the assessment (or be reassessed by a sole assessor rather than a full panel). The final decision on the nature of the reassessment required lies with STAT Council in conjunction with the Assessment Coordinators.

Appeals

Your right to appeal the outcome is limited to circumstances in which you believe there was material procedural irregularity in the assessment process itself. For details, see Appendix 3 below.

Feedback

All those involved in assessments will be asked to give feedback afterwards as to their experience. **Your views are important** and will form part of our on-going review of the assessment procedure, helping to shape the content of the required annual CPD forum for STAT assessors and the further development of the SAP as a whole. If your volunteer student provided any feedback on their experience to you, do please include it in your own if you feel it might be helpful.

APPENDIX 1

Information & Agreement for Volunteer Students (VA1)

Thank you for agreeing to be a volunteer student for an applicant for STAT (Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique) Certification or Teaching Membership. Applicants may be someone who is making the transition from trainee to professional teacher, or a more experienced STAT-Certified teacher seeking to join or re-join STAT as a Teaching Member after a significant break, or perhaps someone who trained in some other manner but now wants to join STAT as a Teaching Member.

Whatever the particular circumstances, the STAT Assessment Procedure enables us to verify that the applicant's knowledge and skills meet the Society's current standards of competence and best practice. This is central to upholding the integrity of STAT-endorsed Alexander Technique teaching, for consistency, strengthening public confidence in our profession and contributing to public safety.

As part of the Assessment, the applicant is observed giving a typical 30-minute Alexander Technique lesson (i.e. not a first or introductory one). A volunteer student is needed for this and your participation in this role is very much appreciated.

Role of the volunteer student

The role of the volunteer during assessment is the same as that of any student having an Alexander Technique lesson except that you will not be charged for the lesson and one or more assessors will be observing quietly throughout. (The assessors are themselves highly experienced Alexander Technique teachers and teacher-trainers who have also been trained in the principles and practice of assessment.)

Your primary responsibility is to turn up, since the assessment cannot be completed without a volunteer student. No other preparation is needed. Just come as you are, confident that all the applicant needs is a student willing to participate, allowing them to teach you as usual through hands-on guidance and verbal explanations. It is understandable for you to feel you want to help them but the more you can treat it as just another lesson, the easier it will be for the applicant.

The applicant will ask you to complete the attached consent form beforehand confirming your understanding of the process, commitment to take part and risk assessment for health.

What to expect on the day

You will be asked to arrive in good time for the start of the applicant's assessment and your lesson will begin about twenty minutes later. There will be someone to welcome you, and a comfortable place to wait.

Try not to be distracted by the presence of assessors and just engage with the lesson as you would normally. The lesson will last for just under 30 minutes and at the end your teacher will thank you and show you out before continuing with their assessment (so they will not have time to chat). If there is anything about your experience as a volunteer student that you would like to comment on afterwards, do bring it up with your teacher later for inclusion in the feedback survey they will be invited to complete. Your participation in the assessment is warmly appreciated.



The Society of Teachers of the
Alexander Technique

VOLUNTEER STUDENT AGREEMENT FOR THE STAT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE (VA1)

Thank you for agreeing to be a volunteer student. Your participation is warmly appreciated

THE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS <i>(to be completed by Applicant)</i>	
Applicant:	
Date of assessment:	Start time:
Venue details: <i>(e.g. name, address, phone number)</i>	
Contact details for Applicant:	
Applicant's signature:	Date:
VOLUNTEER STUDENT DETAILS <i>(to be completed by Student)</i>	
Name:	
Address & Contact details:	
Undertaking In signing this agreement I understand that I am committing to attend for a 30 minute Alexander Technique lesson with the Applicant named above at the stated date, time and venue. I confirm that I have read the Information for Volunteer Students and understand that there will be one or more Assessors observing the lesson quietly throughout and there will be no charge for the lesson. I also confirm that I am not aware of any health condition that would or might increase the risk of illness or injury to either of us during my lesson. I appreciate that my presence is necessary for the Assessment to take place and, in the exceptional circumstance that I am unable to honour my commitment, I undertake to give the Applicant as much notice as possible so that a suitable substitute can be found in time.	
Signature:	Date:

APPENDIX 2

If an Arbiter is needed

There is no implication of any fault on your part if a decision is referred to an Arbiter. An Arbiter is required only when an Assessment Panel has been unable to reach a collective decision through discussion. This is expected to happen extremely rarely.

If called on, the Arbiter's role is to arbitrate between the panel members' professional judgements to reach a fair result for the applicant. It does not involve direct arbitration between the assessors nor between the assessors and the applicant.

Appointment of an Arbiter

Arbiters are themselves trained assessors in good standing with all the qualities necessary for that role. Although an Arbiter is very rarely needed, prompt action is required when the need does arise. For that reason, whenever a Certification Assessment is scheduled, the Assessment Coordinators identify a suitable potential Arbiter ahead of time (avoiding any potential conflict of interest) and ask them to be on standby just in case. Should the standby Arbiter be needed, the Assessment Panel Chair will immediately contact the STAT Office and Assessment Coordinators to notify them. The Arbiter will begin work within 24 hours.

Arbitration

The process begins with a careful review of the assessment documentation (the summary Assessor Forms, the Training Course Report, and the incomplete Assessment Panel Report) to identify where professional judgements differ. The Arbiter then talks to each member of the Assessment Panel individually so that each can present their position fully and the Arbiter can check they have understood the Panel members correctly. The Arbiter is asked to complete this stage within 48 hours of the assessment, if possible.

The Arbiter must then decide how best to resolve the situation and has a number of options for doing so. If the panel members are in fact much closer to agreement than they thought on the day, the Arbiter may facilitate an online meeting with them at which the Panel completes their collective decision. Where the situation is more complex and cannot be resolved with the Assessment Panel, the Arbiter will exercise their own professional judgement to reach a decision based on a detailed, careful consideration of all the evidence before them as to whether the applicant can be said to have demonstrated the necessary readiness to practise as an independent Alexander teacher or not.

If the Arbiter feels able to reach a binding decision safely and confidently on the basis of the documentation and conversations with the panel members alone, they will do so. However, if, after due consideration, the Arbiter does **not** feel able to reach a binding decision safely and confidently on this basis, they have the option of conducting a further assessment of the applicant at which the Arbiter is the sole assessor.

If the Arbiter wishes to carry out such further assessment, the Training Course Representative will explain the situation to the applicant before putting them in contact with the Arbiter to make the necessary arrangements.

The further assessment is normally a repeat of the full assessment procedure (at no cost to the applicant) to give the applicant the best possible chance of demonstrating their skills, knowledge and understanding, and the Arbiter the opportunity to assess for themselves the extent of their readiness to practise. Where the record of the previous assessment indicates that the applicant did better in a particular aspect first time round, the assessment recorded previously will stand SO LONG AS the applicant crosses the threshold for independent teaching in the repeat assessment.

Where possible, the further assessment will take place in time for the applicant to be notified of the final outcome within 2 weeks of the original assessment date.

Notification of outcome

STAT Office will notify the Training Course Representative of the outcome of the Arbiter's involvement as soon as they have received the documented decision so that they can notify the applicant **informally** of the outcome. The applicant will receive **formal** notification in writing from the STAT Office, normally within six working days of the decision being reached

APPENDIX 3

Appeals

Only the applicant has a right of appeal. The right of appeal is limited to circumstances in which the applicant believes there has been **material procedural irregularity** in the assessment process itself.

Appeals must be made **in writing** to the STAT Office using stat@alexandertechnique.co.uk with 'subject' line "Assessment Appeal" within **3 weeks** of the date of the assessment, stating the grounds for appeal. As a minimum the applicant must state (a) in what way the assessment failed to follow the procedure set out in the SAP; and (b) how the applicant believes the procedural irregularity materially affected the outcome.

Preliminary review

On receiving an appeal, STAT Office will make it available to the Assessment Coordinators who must first evaluate whether the grounds stated by the applicant constitute legitimate grounds for appeal.

Taking the applicant's account at face value, they ask themselves:

- Did the assessment follow the procedure laid down in the SAP?
- Did the assessors apply the procedure properly and fairly to reach their decision?

If any doubt has been cast on the above points by the applicant's account, then the applicant has legitimate grounds for appeal and an appropriate Appeal Board is set up. STAT Office will email the applicant to inform them that an investigation is underway, who is carrying it out, what they are going to do, how long it will take and what will happen after it is concluded.

If the stated grounds for appeal relate rather to the professional judgement of the assessors in reaching their decision, this does not constitute legitimate grounds for appeal. The Assessment Coordinators will ask STAT Office to end the process without taking further action, explaining why the applicant's stated grounds do not constitute legitimate grounds for appeal.

Composition of Assessment Appeal Boards

Where there are legitimate grounds for appeal, an Appeal Board of three is set up by the Assessment Coordinators: one Assessment Coordinator, an Investigator, and a member of STAT Council. None of those appointed will have had any previous involvement (other than purely administrative in the case of the Assessment Coordinator) in the disputed assessment procedure and care will be taken to avoid conflicts of interest with regard to the applicant or Assessment Panel.

Investigation Procedure

The Investigator is a trained STAT assessor appointed to investigate the stated grounds for appeal and report to the fellow members of the Appeal Board in writing. Those invited to carry out investigations will have the professional experience and judgement required combined with an ability to listen fairly and impartially.

The Investigator begins with a careful reading of the formal records of the assessment and the appeal letter itself, before talking (individually) to the applicant, the Assessment Panel members and any other person directly involved, should any emerge. The aim of these interviews (typically held online) is to draw out what happened, why it happened, and what impact, if any, it had on the outcome of the assessment from the point of view of each person involved.

In order to create a record of each person's contribution to the investigation, the Investigator will arrange for each participant to provide a follow-up short written statement of what they said afterwards. All such records are held as strictly confidential to the Assessment Appeal Board only.

Once the Investigator is satisfied that sufficient information has been obtained (with a balance of evidence from both sides), this is gathered into a report for consideration by the whole Assessment Appeal Board. This report is structured to record how the investigation has been carried out, what evidence has been gathered (with a summary of its content), the facts established and what is likely to have happened, i.e. the balance of probabilities in the opinion of the Investigator. Both the report

and the evidence are then circulated to the Assessment Appeal Board and a meeting arranged to reach a decision.

Reaching a Decision

The Assessment Appeal Board, chaired by the Assessment Coordinator, must reach a collective decision through discussion of the evidence gathered and the balance of probabilities.

The first area for decision is whether there was, in fact, any **procedural irregularity** in the conduct of the assessment. Did the Assessment Panel deviate from the SAP at all, and, if so, how and why? Was it a minor deviation for good reasons clearly explained to the applicant at the time? Or a significant departure from what the applicant could reasonably have expected to happen in accordance with the SAP and Certification Assessment: a Guide for Applicants?

If the decision is that a procedural irregularity did occur, then the second area for decision is whether that procedural irregularity had a **material** effect on the outcome of the applicant's assessment. Was it a significant procedural irregularity likely to have disrupted the applicant's work on the day, making it difficult for them to demonstrate their true ability in one or more areas? Did those areas correspond to the areas in which the applicant failed to demonstrate readiness to practise or not? How close to demonstrating the required readiness did the applicant get in those or other areas?

If the Assessment Appeal Board ultimately decides that the outcome of the assessment was materially affected by procedural irregularity, the Appeal is upheld.

On the other hand, the Assessment Appeal Board may either

(a) conclude that any procedural irregularity was too minor to be considered material to the outcome; or

(b) find that the original outcome reflected factors that clearly could not have been affected by whatever procedural irregularity occurred.

In these cases, the Appeal is not upheld and the Appeal Board Chair writes to the applicant via STAT Office giving their decision and how it was reached.

Remedy

If an Appeal is upheld, the remedy available is another attempt at the assessment within 6 weeks at no cost to the applicant. This will normally be a full panel assessment with three Independent External Assessors who have had no previous involvement in the applicant's training or in the previous assessment. The decision reached at the second assessment is regarded as final. Any further re-assessment that might be needed later is at the applicant's own cost.

Notification of Outcome

The applicant receives formal notification of the outcome of the Appeal in writing from the STAT Office, giving brief details of the evidence used and the reasons for the Assessment Appeal Board's decision. If the Appeal has been upheld, the letter also explains the remedy and how it will be arranged. The outcome of the Appeal is normally communicated to the applicant within 3 weeks of the Appeal reaching the Assessment Coordinators.

The Assessment Coordinators will also inform the original Assessment Panel members of the outcome. Where an Appeal has been upheld because of material procedural irregularity, the Assessment Appeal Board will further review what went wrong in order to address any changes to the assessment procedure and/or STAT Assessment Training that might be needed in light of it.

In the unlikely event that the Appeal investigation revealed a breach of STAT's Code of Professional Conduct and Professional Competence, the matter will be addressed as detailed in STAT Rule 8.3 and section 5 of the Code.