



The Society of Teachers of the
Alexander Technique

STAT GUIDE TO MODERATION FOR STUDENTS
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Introduction

Moderation is an appraisal process for students in training.

The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (STAT) was established to expound and propagate the practice and theory of Alexander Technique of re-education. STAT also sets and maintains standards for the training of its members. In this capacity, STAT provides certificates for teachers who have completed training according to training requirements set by STAT Rules. (See [STAT Rules 10. Training Courses.](#))

Certification by STAT and membership of the Society are only available once a trainee has been qualified by [an approved] Head of Training (HoT) or has successfully completed the Student Assessment Procedure (SAP).^{*} In order for a HoT to qualify a student or be put forward for assessment, the student must undergo moderation at least twice during their training. This has been required for qualification and certification as a teaching member of STAT since April 1994.

^{*} Students who complete their training on STAT training courses approved and established after 2018 are required to undergo Student Assessment Procedure in order to qualify for STAT membership.

Background and Context

At the beginning of 1990 the Council of STAT agreed to look for ways of harmonising the training of students as they graduated from the many STAT-approved training schools, to bring them into line with other professional training. A panel of experienced teachers from the diverse streams of Alexander teaching was set up to create an acceptable and satisfactory means of so doing, with the collaboration of Heads of Training (HoTs) at that time. Under consideration were factors such as how to appraise the individual student's growth process, and their proficiency in the use of an applied skill. Further, such a method needed to be congruent with the principles and practice of the Alexander Technique itself.

Three years of discussion and working together led to a more developed understanding between the different streams of Alexander teaching, as presented by Heads of Training and members of the Panel. The Panel democratically arrived at agreement about a way forward, which has evolved into the current moderation process. In order to provide continuity of the Moderation Process the Panel needed to be independent of STAT Council. but would work

under the aegis of STAT, who would provide funding for the Moderation process, reimburse travel expenses and ratify new Moderators.

As the Moderation model is a process, not an examination but an enquiry into how the principles and practice of the Alexander Technique are being delivered; it is incumbent for the Moderator to be able to relate to both students and HoTs. This was the reason why the Heads of Training were encouraged to choose, from the Panel, a Moderator with whom they wished to work.

The Panel then created a comprehensive list of competencies that was accepted by all to be essential to the practice of the Alexander Technique. This forms the basis of the current Skills and Competencies List, and Notes for the Guidance of Moderators, which are regularly under review.

Following initial discussion, it was decided to look at three fundamental areas of the student's work:

1. The student's own manner of use and presentation of the Alexander Technique.
2. The understanding of F.M. Alexander's concepts and principles as set out in his four books.
3. The ability to co-ordinate the use of hands and words in a meaningful way during a lesson.

The Moderator's role is independent, external, and advisory. Moderators give assistance to both the students and the HoT during the training, helping to ensure that training and continuous assessment is conducted in a fair and equal manner. The final decision to qualify a student or be put forward for the Student Assessment Procedure rests with the Head of Training. Moderation is not designed to accredit or re-accredit the training courses themselves.

It is important to remember that Moderation is a supportive process by which students and HoTs may explore the way in which we learn to practise and to teach the Alexander Technique.

Moderation: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Moderation?

Moderation is an appraisal process for students in training. It provides an external viewpoint concerning a student's progress and development. Moderation takes place twice during the course of training, usually at the middle or end of the second and third year.

What are the benefits of Moderation?

The student benefits from the feedback given by an experienced teacher who is not part of the regular teaching staff of the course, and who presents an independent perspective. The Moderator is able to provide confirmation of a student's progress. The Moderator may also offer pointers for ongoing learning and development. The Head of Training benefits from the Moderator's external observations, as well as the opportunity to confer about a student's work and progress.

Who determines whether a student qualifies?

A student's qualification is decided ultimately by the Head of Training, who consults with the Moderator prior to making their final decision. In practice, the Moderator's input is influential but not binding. The HoT uses this input in combination with their own judgement, based on their in-depth contact with each student over the extended period of training. This allows for differences in individual students' development to be taken into consideration. Completing the moderation process at two stages of training is a requirement of STAT, and the Moderator confirms with STAT that these have been fulfilled.

What is the Moderator's Skills and Competencies list?

The Skills and Competencies List is a comprehensive table of fundamental requirements, which students of all backgrounds need to meet in order to qualify. This list guides the student and their trainers to prepare for the appraisal, and assists the Moderator and HoT to be systematic, thorough, and fair.

What are the differences between the 1st and 2nd Moderation?

The 1st moderation focuses primarily on the student's ability to work on themselves while putting hands on a pupil. The 2nd moderation focuses on the student's ability to maintain this work while teaching a lesson.

What happens during a Moderation?

The Moderator observes the student in action in class with fellow students and works with them individually in detail. The student is also required to put hands on the Moderator. The student will be asked to discuss their understanding of concepts, principles and procedures that appear on the Skills and Competencies list.

Does a student receive feedback?

Moderators submit a written report to the Head of Training, to be discussed with the student later. In some cases, verbal feedback is given to both parties at the time of the Moderation as well.

Can one fail a Moderation?

Moderation is not a pass / fail evaluation, but rather a process to facilitate a better-informed assessment concerning the student being moderated. Moderation can be seen as resembling a 'viva.'

What happens to the Moderator's reports?

Moderators' reports are confidential and should remain with the Head of Training and the trainee, who may wish to keep them. Reports are not sent to STAT.

The Moderation Process

The moderation process has been developed to make appraisal of students systematic, consistent and fair. It ensures that fundamental requirements are met for teaching the Alexander Technique. The List of Skills and Competencies, which represents the core of the Alexander Technique, supports this process. It also harmonises and upholds standards across the spectrum of training schools. The spirit of the process is to decide whether a given student is likely to continue developing their skills. The moderation process comprises both appraisal and education.

Moderation generally takes place within 6 months of the end of the second year of training and again within 6 months of the end of the training. This is to give plenty of time for the student (and HoT) to take on board the comments of the Moderator.

In the first moderation the Moderator primarily assesses the student's ability to work on him/herself. In the final moderation the Moderator looks at the student's ability to maintain this process while giving a lesson.

The Head of Training, Moderator and student agree a specific day, time and duration of the moderation to take place. With the consent of the Head of Training, the Moderator may choose to observe the trainees working in class before taking them in a small group for a more intensive session of hands-on work with the Moderator which may include one-to-one work, discussion of principle and practice in applying the AT. After each moderation a confidential written report should be given to the HoT who will discuss its content with the trainee.

In order to be moderated, a student must be a registered and paid-up student member of STAT for the duration of their training. Completion of a 1st moderation (6th term) is required by STAT's insurers for a student to teach members of the public under supervision. The moderator must sign the student's application form to STAT for certification and ordinary membership.

A third moderation may be added at the request of the Head of Training or the student.

The Skills and Competencies List

The Skills and Competencies List states the essential requirements for students to meet in order to qualify. These are considered through the following areas:

Use and Presentation

- The student's ability to observe their own and others' use reasonably accurately.
- The student's ability to use themselves satisfactorily whilst working, as well as in general.
- The student's ability to present and explain the Technique in a professional manner.

Understanding

- The student should be able adequately to explain the items on the list and to show evidence of using the concepts, principles and procedures appropriately whilst teaching.
- The student should be aware of the contents of the code of professional conduct.

Practical skills/Hands-on Work

- The student should be able to observe use accurately in themselves and the pupil.
- The student should be able to convey the understanding and experience of inhibiting and directing accurately and effectively to the pupil.
- The student should carry through standard procedures skilfully and demonstrate their practical applications.

What happens in a Moderation - General Structure

As a teacher independent from the day-to-day training, the Moderator's role is to ascertain whether the students are learning what they have signed up for in a fair and equal manner in a supportive environment. The Moderator will visit the training course twice during a student's training to observe and work with the student and give feedback to the Head of Training who will share it with the student.

It is advisable for students to familiarise themselves with the STAT Guide to Student Moderation in advance. The Moderator will also explain the process and purpose to the student.

The Moderators use the Skills and Competencies List to structure this process.

This has three headings describing the essential principles of the Alexander Technique.

- **Heading 1** concerns the student's **Presentation of the Alexander Technique** and encourages the Moderator to look at the student's own manner of use when working. It includes clarity of explanation, an ability to observe themselves and their pupils and shows whether they understand and can keep their own inhibition and direction going when working. We ask whether they have an ongoing expectation of change as they work on themselves and are they able to teach their pupils to work on themselves?
- **Heading 2 Understanding.** This column states the main principles of the AT which lie at the core of FM Alexander's teaching. We ask the student to explain in detail what they understand by certain concepts such as Primary Control, Faulty sensory appreciation, Inhibition and Direction, End-gaining, the Force of Habit and Means-whereby goals can be gained indirectly. We expect the student to be able to explain these concepts coherently.
- **Heading 3 Practical Skills.** Here we ask the student to demonstrate, verbally and practically while using their hands, some of the procedures they have learned during their training to enable a change in the state of the pupil. The subject may be another student or the Moderator themselves.

Obviously to cover all these options during a Moderation would be impossible, so the Moderator, with previous input from the Head of Training, is free to choose what items are most appropriate during the 1st and 2nd Moderation.

Bearing the above categories in mind, the Moderator may work with and observe the students to be moderated during general class time before taking them to a separate room for a more in-depth appraisal of their understanding and practical abilities.

The Moderator works with a student and the student should work with the Moderator. The student will be observed working with another person, either a fellow student or their training pupil.

Moderators may also consider other relevant issues, not easy to appraise accurately, that stand outside the list of skills and competencies. These include areas such as a pupil’s motivation to become a teacher, their commitment to self-discipline and work on Self, their blind spots, their attitude toward teaching others to work on themselves, and priorities in teaching.

Skills and Competencies Table

Presentation and Use	Understanding	Practical Skills	
Own Use	Use and Functioning	Hands	Words
⇕ ⇕	Primary Control	-----	-----
Explanation	Inhibition	-----	-----
⇕ ⇕	Direction	-----	-----
Observation	End-gaining	-----	-----
	Means-whereby	-----	-----
	Non-doing	-----	-----
	Faulty sensory appreciation	-----	-----
	Psychophysical unity	-----	-----
	Force of habit	-----	-----
	FM’s life & books	-----	-----
	History of Technique	-----	-----
	Giving and withholding consent	-----	-----
		-----	-----

This is a list of the minimum requirements for the appraisal of students.

What?	Why?	Extras
<p>Moderators should look for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to keep inhibition and directions going while teaching; 2. Clarity of explanation; 3. On-going work on themselves and expectation of change; 4. The necessity for teaching pupils to work on themselves; 5. How they see their role as a teacher. 	<p>These items represent the core of Alexander’s teaching.</p> <p>Other items may be added at the discretion of the Moderator. See → → →</p>	<p>If the Moderator, with the agreement of the Head of Training, wishes to examine the student’s proficiency in any other area or procedure of the work, this may be done.</p> <p>This could involve application work or specific procedures (e.g. Crawling.)</p>