



Regulatory Policy Statement

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Preamble

This policy statement is for use by STAT Council and authorised sub-committees as an introduction for discussions with other organisations and government bodies.

STAT has robust systems, policies and procedures in place and aspires to be a professional organisation following best practice. Hence it is well positioned to cope with any regulatory regime, voluntary or otherwise, and is willing to work with others to develop appropriate regulatory structures.

STAT is also willing to work with and associate with other disciplines/organisations to further its aims and objects as defined by its Articles of Association.

What is the Alexander Technique?

Origin

Seeking to remedy a vocal problem that was interfering with his ability to perform as an orator, Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) undertook extensive self-observation and experimentation over a period of time. In the process, he discovered that there was a direct relationship between an improvement in his functioning and his ability to inhibit his habitual responses to stimuli. He found that it was necessary to consider the individual as a whole, with thought and action being indivisible in the process of re-education. He described how his work evolved, the concepts that grew out of it, and their import and applications in his writings and in four published books:

- Man's Supreme Inheritance (1910, 1918);
- Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual (1923);
- The Use of the Self (1932);
- The Universal Constant in Living (1941);

Since his death in 1955, his work has become known as "the Alexander Technique."

The Practice of the Alexander Technique

Those who study the Alexander Technique learn to become aware of habitual responses to

stimuli - including such self-generated stimuli as the intention to act. They learn to prevent ineffective and inefficient habitual actions and responses through careful attention to how they prepare for an action. Practice of the Alexander Technique leads to increased self-awareness and improved psychophysical functioning.

Method

- A F M Alexander developed specific methods to convey his work and to train others in how to teach his work. The main teaching methods are demonstration, verbal instruction, and the use of the teacher's hands to convey a working knowledge of improved coordination in everyday activities such as sitting, standing, and walking.
- B Lessons in the Alexander Technique are conducted while clothed. It is not necessary or appropriate for student or teacher to undress during lessons.

Benefits

Benefits of the Alexander Technique have been documented since the late nineteenth century. More recent studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals indicate that benefits can include improvements in performance, breathing, voice, balance, pain management and emotional state. (Some sources cited below — for further information contact STAT). However, any health benefits that may occur are secondary to the primary purpose of the lessons, which is to teach the student how to improve general psychophysical functioning.

Sources:

- "Ethology and Stress Diseases", Nikolaas Tinbergen, *Science*, 185:20-27, 1974
- "Stress Reduction and Optimal Psychological Functioning", Samuel Reiser, DDS, Sixth International Monteux Conference on Stress, 1994
- "Early Experiences of a Multidisciplinary Pain Management Program, Keren Fisher, MSc ABPsS, *Holistic Medicine*, 3 (1):47-56, 1988
- "The Alexander Technique, An Approach to Pain Control", Judith C. Stern, MA, PT, *Lifeline*, Summer, 1992
- "A Study of Stress Amongst Professional Musicians", Michael Nielsen, Medical School, University of Aarhus, Denmark, in *The Alexander Technique: Medical and Physiological Aspects*, Chris Stevens, e3d., STA Book, London, 1994
- "Method of Changing Stereotyped Response Patterns by the Inhibition of Certain Postural Sets", Frank Pierce Jones, Institute for Psychological Research, Tufts University, *Psychological Review*, 72, (3):196-214, 1965
- "Enhanced Respiratory Muscular Education in Normal Adults after Lessons in Proprioceptive Musculoskeletal Education without Exercises", John H. M. Austin, MD, FCCP, and Pearl Ausubel, BA, *CHEST*, 102:486-490, 1992
- "Randomized controlled trial of the Alexander Technique for idiopathic Parkinson's disease" C Stallibrass, P Sissons, C Chalmers, *Clinical Rehabilitation* (2002) 16 705-718
- "Randomised controlled trial of Alexander Technique lessons, exercise, and massage (ATEAM) for patients with chronic low back pain" Little P, Lewith G, Webley F, et al.
- *British Medical Journal* 2008;337:a884.
- "Increased dynamic regulation of postural tone through Alexander Technique training" Cacciatore TW, Gurfinkel VS, Horak FB, Cordo PJ, Ames KE. *Human Movement Science* 2011 Feb;30(1):74-89

Distinctiveness

The Alexander Technique is an educational process. Teachers of the Alexander Technique

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give lessons to pupils; they do not treat patients.

- A) The Alexander Technique is not a field of medicine. It is distinct from physical therapy, psychotherapy, chiropractic, medicine, and any other field that involves diagnosing a disorder or disease. Alexander Teachers do not diagnose or treat specific medical, psychological or emotional conditions.
- B) The Alexander Technique is not bodywork. It is distinct from massage, Rolfing, and any other field that involves manipulations, treatments or modalities. In the Alexander Technique lesson, the teacher's hands are used to convey a working understanding of improved coordination, not to manipulate tissue.
- C) It is not "energy work." Alexander Teachers may use the word "energy" as a metaphor for thinking; however, the teacher's intention is to guide the pupil to become aware of and change psychophysical habits, not to "use energy to heal."

What is STAT?

The Society of teachers of the Alexander Technique (STAT) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales, Registration number 5533966.

The objects for which STAT is established are: To teach, expound, promote and propagate the theory and practice of the Alexander Technique of Re-Education based on the teaching, practice, theory and writings of F Matthias Alexander (hereinafter called "the Alexander Technique"); to support teachers of the Alexander Technique in teaching the Alexander Technique.

Since its organisation in 1958, STAT has been recognised as the founding Alexander Technique society in the world. There are currently fourteen professional societies worldwide which maintain affiliation with STAT. The teaching members of these societies all meet similar high standards of training and conduct, and represent the largest community of professional Alexander Technique teachers in the world.

STAT aims to promote the Alexander Technique at its highest standard of professional practice and conduct.

Training Standards

Teacher Certification Requirements and Teacher Training Course Standards are defined in the Rules of STAT.

A Teacher Certification

STAT Certification requires satisfactory completion an STAT Approved Teacher Training Course or successful completion of the Assessment process as detailed in the rules

B Teacher Training Course Standards

STAT Approved Teacher Training Courses meet strict guidelines, as below:

- 1) A Training Course shall have at least 1,600 total class hours, over a period of at least three years.
- 2) 80% (1,328 hours) of these hours shall consist of practical work in the Alexander Technique.
- 3) Each training week shall consist of no less than 12 hours of classes and no more than 20 hours of classes over at least four days with each day to consist of no less than three hours of classes and no more than four hours of classes.
- 4) The ratio of teachers to students shall not be less than one teacher to five students during practical work, with all such teachers being certified by STAT or an Affiliated Society.

- 5) A training course shall have a main (named) assistant who has been certified by and has been in continuous membership of STAT or an Affiliated Society for at least five years.
- 6) Any application to run a training course shall include details of the scheduling of classes; an outline curriculum; details of the hands-on instruction, student supervisions and any supplementary material that will be taught together with any other information that Council may deem necessary in order to consider the application.
- 7) A training course shall comply with STAT's policies relating to the moderation of students and the conduct of training courses as set out in the respective handbooks and policies.
- 8) All new training schools will be subject to a review after three years of being set up.
- 9) Any teacher applying to set up an approved teacher training course shall have been certified, practising and in continuous membership of STAT or of an Affiliated Society for at least 10 consecutive years.

Professionalism

STAT functions as a fully professional society with

- A. Rules;
- B. Policies and procedures regarding professional conduct and professional competence including disciplinary and complaints procedures; child protection and vulnerable adults policy; equal opportunities policy and membership insurance requirements
- C. A commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) (the policy for continuing professional development requirements is currently under revision and has not yet been ratified by the membership)
- D. Training and training course requirements; and
- E. International affiliation standards.

Position on Regulation

A) Self-regulation

The Alexander Technique has not been shown to pose any risk to the public, and STAT demonstrates self-regulation by maintaining professional training requirements, a code of professional conduct and professional competence, and established disciplinary and complaints procedures. STAT is willing to work with any governmental or other regulatory body on self regulation.

B) Identity

STAT broadly opposes any regulation that attempts to categorize, confuse, identify, or conflate the Alexander Technique with any other discipline, including but not limited to medicine, psychotherapy, physical therapy, New Age practices, religion, massage, bodywork, or energy work.

C) Reciprocal Respect

STAT supports other disciplines in their pursuit of professional identity. We respect the individual situation and needs of each professional discipline. We support the right of each discipline to define itself, as long as it does not attempt to subsume other disciplines in the process of doing so. We will work together with other professional groups as appropriate to educate each other about our differences and to further common goals.