

Eligibility Criteria to Begin UK, ISST-Approved Schema Therapy Training Programmes 2.0

Approved 22nd October 2024

There are three aspects to the UK Eligibility Criteria (UKEC) that together aim to be equivalent to the international ISST criteria¹:

1. Academic
2. Psychotherapy Training
3. Professional Regulation (which must be maintained)

Additionally, it is advised that candidates have and maintain Professional Indemnity Insurance

UK ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. MINIMUM ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A Bachelor with honours (or higher) degree in a psychology-related subject, or for BABCP or BACP Accredited applicants entering training after August 2018, in any subject.

2. MINIMUM PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING STANDARDS

Graduation from a counselling, psychotherapy or applied psychology training programme run by an approved professional body is usually necessary. See section C below for exceptions.

Training should be in an approved therapy model (see section B.2. below) and include:

- ii) A minimum of 200 hours of supervised one-to-one clinical practice with adults. This should include supervised assessment and formulation.
- iii) A minimum of 400 hours professionally related training of which 200 hours should be provided directly by recognised trainers.

3. PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

Candidates must have and maintain registration with a professional body that provides regulation of their practice in the country/ies in which they practice (e.g. BACP; see other examples in Appendix 2). The regulatory body must thus have a code of practice / ethics and a process for handling complaints. A professional body's accreditation with the Professional Standards Authority can be considered a means of ascertaining this.

¹ i. Academic training: Hold at least a Masters degree in psychology, clinical social work, psychiatric nursing or a counseling [sic] area that leads to licensing; or a medical degree with psychiatric residency (or residency equivalent if it is defined differently in that country).

ii. License or certification for the independent practice of psychotherapy

APPLICANT CATEGORIES

A: Programme Applicants Automatically Meeting UKEC

Individuals are deemed to meet the above UKEC if they are:

- Registered as a Clinical, Counselling or Forensic Psychologist with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC)
- Fully Accredited with the BABCP (British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies), including those who do so via the KSF (Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes) route
- Fully Accredited with the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy)

B: SCoPEd Psychotherapists and Counsellors

Psychotherapists and counsellors registered with professional bodies other than those in A above that are included in the SCoPEd Framework, are deemed to meet UKEC if they meet the following two criteria:

a) They are in a membership category in Column B or C of the SCoPEd framework, i.e.:

- ACC (Association of Christian Counsellors) Accredited Member
- BPC (British Psychoanalytic Council) Psychodynamic Counsellor or Psychotherapist
- UKCP (UK Council for Psychotherapy) Psychotherapeutic Counsellor or Psychotherapist
- NCS (National Counselling Society) Accredited Professional Registrant

b) The main therapy model in which they have trained is approved by the NTDC-UK based on having an evidence base, being trans-diagnostic, including case conceptualisation / formulation. Currently approved models include:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Cognitive Analytic Therapy
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Mentalisation Based Therapy

Therapy models that are currently not approved include: hypnotherapy, coaching, mindfulness, Compassion-Focused, Neurolinguistic Programming, Sensorimotor, and Dialectical Behavioural Therapies.

Evidence for meeting the above criteria must be submitted to the NTDC-UK. See Appendix 1 for this process.

C. All Other UK-Based Programme Applicants

All applicants not covered in sections A and B above are considered on a case-by-case basis by the NTDC-UK. See Appendix 1 for this process. They will be required to meet either:

- the standards in the 'UK Eligibility Criteria' section above; or
- the equivalent outlined below under 'Non-Therapist Practitioners with a Core Mental Health Qualification'

Non-Therapist Practitioners with a Core Mental Health Qualification

Non-therapist mental health professionals such as mental health social workers, mental health occupational therapists, mental health nurses, nurse therapists, community psychiatric nurses and psychiatrists must meet the following criteria:

1. ACADEMIC

- At least a bachelor's with honours degree in their field or a related one; or
- A non-related degree if the pathway to a candidate's professional training allowed a non-related degree plus relevant previous health care experience; or
- If the applicant belongs to the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) and trained before the introduction of degree courses, a diploma. (The degree requirement was introduced by the NMC from September 2011).

2. PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING

Comprehensive and well-rounded training (not in-house) spanning several years in an approved (see section B.2) psychotherapeutic approach with a minimum of 200 hours of clinical practice with adults, supervised by experts in that area.

3. PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

Registration with the relevant UK professional regulatory body (see Appendix 2 for examples).

D. Non-UK Based Applicants

Applicants practising in non-UK countries must meet eligibility criteria of the country in which they work to begin any Schema Therapy Certification Training Programme.

APPEAL PROCESS

Appeal within three months of an eligibility decision can be made to the ISST Certification Coordinator by submitting a case including the original portfolio that was reviewed by the ESCTAS (Eligibility to Start Certification Training Advisory Subcommittee; as per the process outlined in Appendix 1).

This should then be sent to the Chair of the NTDC-UK, who will in turn send it to the ISST Certification Coordinator with the ESCTAS's reasons for judging the application as not meeting the UKEC, copying in all UK training programme directors.

At the end of the appeal process the Chair of the NTDC-UK UK, is to inform all other training programme directors of the ISST Executive Board decision and their rationale.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Submission of Portfolios to NTDC-UK

Candidates are to produce a portfolio of evidence of meeting the UKEC with the guidance of the Director² of the certification programme to which they wish to apply, including:

- the eligibility route they are seeking (e.g. 'SCoPEd Counsellor'; 'Non-UK-based core training'; 'Core MH Qualification', etc.)
- certificates of academic qualifications and psychotherapy training
- supporting correspondence and evidence from universities, training organisations, supervisors, etc.
- evidence of their registration with the relevant regulatory body

This portfolio is to be sent to the ESCTAS, copying in all other UK training programme directors. A decision will be made by the NTDC-UK as to whether an applicant meets the UKEC according to the process outlined in the NTDC-UK Terms of Reference section 7g - k.

APPENDIX 2: UK Mental Health Professions Regulatory Bodies

- i **Nursing**: Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
- ii **Occupational Therapy**: Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) British Association and College of Occupational Therapists (BAOT/COT)
- iii **Psychiatry**: Royal College of Psychiatrists. (RCP)
- iv **Social Work** (England): Social Work England British Association for Social Workers
- v **Social Work** (Northern Ireland): Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
- vi **Social Work** (Scotland): Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
- vii **Social Work** (Wales): Social Care Wales (SCW) Care Council for Wales

² Training programme directors requiring further guidance on this procedure are directed to a letter dated 26 January 2022 which was sent to all training programme directors, and which goes into more detail. This can be obtained from any member of the Eligibility to Start Certification Training Advisory Subcommittee.