



# International Accreditation Commission for Systemic Therapy Education

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## Standards for Systemic Therapy Education Programs

Adopted: January 15, 2015

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### **Mission Statement of the International Accreditation Commission for Systemic Therapy Education**

Created as a semi-autonomous body under the auspices of the International Family Therapy Association (IFTA), the International Accreditation Commission for Systemic Therapy Education (IACSTE) focuses on the development and implementation of quality standards for programs around the world that provide systemic therapy education and training. These standards are created to enhance the development of professionals who will be qualified to provide systemic therapy for individuals, couples, and families in the communities in which they live and work.

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### **Standards for Education and Training**

The Standards set forth in this document are intended to serve as:

1. The minimal preparation standards for practice recommended by the International Accreditation Commission for Systemic Therapy Education (IACSTE).
2. Standards for application by national/local registration, licensing/registration, and accrediting bodies in a progressive fashion in the culture in which the program exists. That is, as family/systemic therapy education and practice mature, programs may choose to increase offerings and establish higher expectations.

Two different patterns for the preparation of family/systemic therapists exist:

- 1) The practice of family/systemic therapy: This pattern involves adding specialist preparation to the basic preparation acquired in another field. Substantive knowledge and supervised clinical training in family therapy are added to the original education.
- 2) The profession of family/systemic therapy: This pattern involves education through masters or doctoral degree programs and supervised clinical practice specifically in family/systemic therapy. This pattern exists, for example, in North America where there

are scores of accredited graduate programs and licensure/certification of Marital and Family Therapists is established in all 50 states of the USA, as well as in parts of Canada, where other professionals also practice within the scope of their practice.

These IACSTE Standards are concerned with education and training for the practice of family therapy and not necessarily with the establishment and development of a distinct profession of family therapy. They are intended for guidance in building on theoretical and clinical training and experience generally gained in a mental health or closely related discipline.

### **Components of Education and Training**

The knowledge, conceptual understanding, and clinical experience and skills that are recommended for family/systemic therapy preparation include:

1. Theoretical Foundations
  - a. Principles of Systems Theory and Applications to Families
  - b. Individual and Family Life-Cycle Development
  - c. Family Forms and Social Systems, Class, and Culture
  - d. Psychopathology and Dysfunctional Family Patterns
  - e. Models of Family/Systemic Therapy and Applications in Various Settings
2. Research
  - a. Comprehension of Research Methodology
  - b. Knowledge of current Research Evidence relative to Family/Systemic Therapy and interventions
3. Ethics and Related Professional Issues
  - a. Ethics Related to Individual and Relational Matters
  - b. Legal Issues Related to Working with Clients
  - c. Relevant Statutes/Regulations/Mores of Family/Systemic Therapy
4. Clinical Skills Development
  - a. Clinical Practice With Individuals, Couples, and Families under the direction of Qualified Family/Systemic Therapy Supervisors
  - b. Experience and Demonstrated Competence in:
    - i. Establishment of Therapeutic Contact With Client System
    - ii. Client Assessment and Diagnosis
    - iii. Treatment Planning
    - iv. Therapeutic Interventions and Case Management
    - v. Assessment of treatment and clinical outcomes
5. Provide one continuing education program for graduates
  - a. Indicate program agenda
  - b. Specify the continuing education units

## Tentative Outline of Academic Credits and Contact Hours

### Credit Hours\*    Contact Hours

<b>20</b>	<b>200-300</b>	<b>Theoretical Foundations</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>10-30</b>	<b>Research Methodology</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>40-80</b>	<b>Ethics and Related Professional Issues</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>90-135</b>	<b>Clinical Skills Development</b>

Recommendations include at least 230 contact hours of theory and substance-based coursework; 250 hours of clinical practice in practica or clinical internships, including at least 125 hours of relational cases—couple or families; and at least 100 hours of supervision (individual and group) of those cases. Twenty-five cases must be directly observed (live or videotaped).

[\*Note: It is recommended that one credit hour contain at least 10-30 contact hours—preferably the higher number---some of which may consist of guided individual study, distance learning, and other accepted methods of learning .]

## **Application Process to become an Accredited Systemic Therapy Preparation Program**

Please forward the **Word** document, answering all of the questions, to IACSTE. The International Commission will review the application and respond with their evaluation within two months.

The International Commission may 1) approve a program, 2) offer a provisional status pending changes or additions to the program, or 3) make programmatic suggestions and request the program file another application after changes have been made.

### **Fees:**

#### **Application Fee**

The application fee must be sent by electronic bank transfer or bank wire transfer to the IACSTE bank account. See the appendix for further information. Once the application fee has been received, the International Accreditation Commission for Systemic Therapy Education will review the application.

Category I: \$250

Category II: \$200

Category III: \$100

#### **Accreditation Status Fee**

If a program receives Accredited Status, the following 3-year fee applies.

Category I: \$250

Category II: \$200

Category III: \$100

**For further information regarding the application process or payment procedures,  
please contact:**

William Hiebert

Commission Secretary

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### **International Accreditation Commission for Systemic Therapy Education**

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