

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS ENTITLING TO THE USE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL TITLE OF PSYCHOTHERAPIST

GENERAL

Psychotherapy is a target-oriented form of treatment carried out by health care professionals aimed at enhancing psychological health and functioning.

Psychotherapy is used to treat patients with psychological disturbances or other problems treatable with psychotherapeutic methods. In addition to psychological manifestations, disturbances and problems may manifest themselves physically, interactively or socially.

Psychotherapy aims to remove or to alleviate psychological disturbances and related states of suffering, to foster psychological growth and development, and to enhance the abilities of the treated person for independent problem solving.

The school of psychotherapy employed shall be based on a comprehensive scientific psychological theory which helps understand both the normal development of a person and the different forms of psychological disturbances. When choosing school and method of psychotherapy, their suitability for treating the disturbance from which the patient suffers shall be given consideration.

Examples of such schools include psychoanalytical, group psychoanalytical, family therapeutic and cognitive theories, as well as all methods derived from them.

A psychotherapist may practice within a work community or as an independent practitioner.

Persons applying for training shall hold:

- A degree of Licentiate of Medicine, a suitable Master's degree in health care or social work or another suitable Master's degree. The Master's degree shall include studies in the field of psychology and/or psychiatry or specialized studies in subjects relevant to psychotherapy. Detailed study requirements below.

or

- A suitable polytechnic degree in health care or social work or a suitable equivalent diploma, in which case the applicants shall generally, prior to psychotherapy training, have completed specialized studies in subjects relevant to psychotherapy. Detailed requirements below.

Before undertaking psychotherapy training, the applicants shall have at least two years of experience in health care work, mental health work or in a corresponding field of work.

To qualify as psychotherapists, trainees shall undergo a sufficient amount of personal psychotherapy that aims to provide psychotherapists with the abilities to carry out their profession in such a way that their own personal intentions do not interfere with the course of therapy or put the patient's interest in jeopardy.

Psychotherapy training shall include a sufficient amount of practical psychotherapeutic patient work.

Psychotherapy training shall include a sufficient amount of supervised psychotherapy work to ensure that patient safety, understanding of patients throughout the treatment process and the evaluation of trainees' own activities are carried out appropriately.

Psychotherapy training is provided according to agreed standardized principles. The training shall originally have been designed as psychotherapy training in such a way that theoretical studies, psychotherapeutic patient work, supervised work and personal psychotherapy form a whole. The training shall prepare applicants to apply a given school of psychotherapy but should also include familiarization with other psychotherapy schools.

The occupational title of psychotherapist can be obtained via different levels of education. The National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs grants the right to the title based on a minimum of three years of special level psychotherapy training and/or advanced special level psychotherapy training in Finland. The right to use the occupational title of a psychotherapist can additionally be granted based on corresponding training completed abroad. A protected title of individuals having completed special level or advanced special level psychotherapy training may be noted in the Central Register of Health Care Professionals upon application (Act on Health Care Professionals, 559/1994, and Decree on Health Care Professionals, 564/1994).

Advanced special level psychotherapy training may be either psychotherapy training of 4 – 6 consecutive years or two-stage training. In the two-stage training model, the advanced special level training (3 + 2 – 3 years) to be completed after special level training shall be in the same psychotherapy school and enhance the know-how acquired during special level training. The training shall be completed in such a manner that a period of no more than ten years separates the two sets of training.

Professional organizations offering psychotherapy training shall have a training committee and an ethics committee. The latter shall comprise also persons not responsible for training.

PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

1. Special level training (ET)

Training provider

The professional organization shall have

- a person responsible for training and a training committee

- responsibility for the continuity of training, an itemized education plan and an implemented training program
- a record of students and completed studies
- an ethics committee

If the training is provided by more than one organization, the reasons shall be given for the role and task of each.

Instructors

Instructors shall hold an advanced special psychotherapy degree in the relevant psychotherapy school, which shall be entered in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs. Supplementary instructors may include other experts.

Trainee selection criteria

Trainees are required to hold:

- Primarily, a degree of Licentiate in Medicine, a Master's degree in psychology or, in special cases, another suitable higher university degree in health care (for example, a Master's degree in Health Care)
- A Master's degree in Sociology or Political Science with a major primarily in Social Work, Social Psychology or Social Pedagogy.
- Another suitable university diploma (primarily, a Master's degree in Theology or in Education with a focus on specialist training in special education, special education teacher training or early childhood special education teacher training)

The higher university degree shall include studies in psychology and/or psychiatry or a minimum 30 credits (800 hours) of complementary specialized courses in psychology, psychiatry or psychotherapy preparing trainees for psychotherapy practice.

- A suitable polytechnic diploma in health care (licensed health care professionals, primarily registered nurses, public health nurses or midwives).
- A suitable polytechnic diploma in social services (primarily Bachelor of Social Services with a major in social services customer work)
- A suitable college-level education diploma in social services and health care, e.g. registered nurses specialised in psychiatry or registered nurses with a basic degree including psychiatric nursing, social welfare supervision or social pedagogy.

In case of degrees other than higher university degrees, the trainees shall in general, prior to psychotherapy training, have completed at least 30 credits (800 hours) of specialised studies in psychotherapy. However, this shall not apply to registered nurses with a college-level degree and specialisation in psychiatry or registered nurses with a basic education including psychiatric nursing.

All trainees shall also have a minimum of two years of work experience in care work, mental health work or corresponding duties, be able to do psychotherapeutic work during training and show individual aptitude (based on an interview).

Content and scope of training (minimum 60 credits)

The scope of training shall be at least 60 credits (1,600 working hours overall) spread over a minimum of three years and forming a systematic, comprehensive and process-natured whole. ^[1]

Overall work includes^[2]:

- seminars and the required preparation (e.g. study of the literature to be covered)
- supervision and preparations (excluding, however, the actual therapy sessions)
- personal psychotherapy (minimum duration required in training)
- writing of thesis

Theoretical and methodological education (50 credits)

Theoretical training and methodological training form a systematic and theoretically uniform whole.

The minimum scope of theoretical and methodological training is 50 credits (=1,350 working hours), of which:

- a) a minimum 15 credits of theory seminars and clinical seminars (= 200 hours of seminar sessions and 200 hours of direct preparation, i.e. a total of 400 working hours). Seminar training may include a maximum of 30 hours of lectures.
- b) 35 credits (950 hours) of other theory and methodological training as follows:
 - familiarisation with literature readings, periodical assignments and other independent studies included in the study program
 - literature requirements consist of a minimum of 3,000 pages of essential material relating to the relevant school of psychotherapy, its scientific basis and effectiveness, as well as literature discussing general psychotherapy theory. ^[3]
 - thesis: a demanding written project on a special issue in the relevant school of psychotherapy requiring extensive research, and related supervised work and revision.

Psychotherapeutic patient work (not included in credits)

The number of the therapy cases treated during training depends on the school of psychotherapy in use.

A total of at least 300 hours of psychotherapeutic patient work in accordance with the relevant school of psychotherapy is required during training.

Supervised psychotherapy treatment (minimum 7.5 credits)

Supervised psychotherapy treatment shall account for at least 7.5 credits (= 100 hours of supervised work and 100 hours of preparation, i.e. a total of 200 hours).

Instructors are required to hold an advanced special level psychotherapy degree in the relevant psychotherapy school as entered in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs.

Personal psychotherapy (3 - 10 credits)

Depending on school of psychotherapy, the training shall include 3 – 10 credits (80 – 250 hours) of personal psychotherapy relating to the school in question. For certain schools, the requirement may be higher but no more than 10 credits may count toward the training.

The psychotherapists are required to hold an advanced special level psychotherapy degree in the relevant school of psychotherapy as entered in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs.

2. Advanced special level psychotherapy (VET) training

Training provider

The professional organization shall have

- a person responsible for training and a training committee
- responsibility for the continuity of training
- a training program for instructors and a procedure to certify and approve advanced special level instructor training and an itemized education plan and an implemented training program
- a record of students and completed studies
- an ethics committee

If the training is provided by more than one organization, the reasons shall be given for the role and task of each.

Instructors

Instructors shall be qualified to instruct in their relevant school of psychotherapy. Such qualification consist of an advanced special level psychotherapy degree in the relevant psychotherapy school, followed by a teacher training in the relevant psychotherapy school in question provided by the training organization. In exceptional cases, supervisors may include other persons approved by the training organization who shall be highly conversant with the practice and teaching of the relevant school of psychotherapy.

Instructors shall be registered as advanced special level psychotherapist in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs. Additional instructors may include other experts.

Training models

Training may be either 4 – 6 consecutive years of advanced special level psychotherapy training (I) or a two-stage training where a minimum of 3 years of special level training is followed by at least 2 years of advanced special level training in the same school of psychotherapy (II).

I Uniform training model for advanced special level training (VET)

Trainee selection criteria

Trainees are required to hold:

- Primarily, a degree of Licentiate in Medicine, a Master's degree in psychology or, in special cases, another suitable higher university degree in health care (for example, a Master's degree in Health Care)
- A Master's degree in Sociology or Political Science with a major primarily in Social Work, Social Psychology or Social Pedagogy
- Another suitable university diploma (primarily a Master's degree in Theology or in Education with a focus on specialist training in special education, special education teacher training or early childhood special education teacher training)

The higher university degree shall include psychological and/or psychiatric studies or a minimum 30 credits (800 hours) of complementary specialized courses in psychology, psychiatry or psychotherapy preparing trainees for psychotherapy practice.

- A suitable polytechnic diploma in health care (licensed health care professionals, primarily registered nurses, public health nurses or midwives)
- A suitable polytechnic diploma in social services (primarily Bachelor of Social Services with a major in social services customer work)
- A suitable college-level education diploma in social services and health care, including registered nurses specialised in psychiatry or registered nurses with a basic degree including psychiatric nursing, social welfare supervision or social pedagogy.

In case of degrees other than higher university degrees, trainees shall in general, prior to psychotherapy training, have completed at least 30 credits (800 hours) of specialised studies in psychotherapy. This, however, shall not apply to registered nurses with a college-level degree and specialisation in psychiatry or registered nurses with a basic education including psychiatric nursing.

All trainees shall also have a minimum of two years of work experience in care work, mental health work or corresponding duties, be able to do psychotherapeutic work during training and show individual aptitude (based on an interview).

Content and scope of training (minimum 90 credits)

The scope of training shall be at least 90 credits (2,430 working hours overall) of advanced special level training spread over 4 – 6 years.

Training shall form a systematic, comprehensive and process-natured whole and it shall include training to teach psychotherapy.

Trainees cannot apply for the protected title of special level psychotherapist until their 4 – 6 years of advanced special level training is completed.

Overall work includes [\[4\]](#):

- seminars and the required preparation (e.g. study of the literature to be covered)
- supervision and preparations (excluding, however, the actual therapy sessions)

- personal psychotherapy (minimum duration required in training)
- writing of thesis

Theoretical and methodological education (minimum 70 credits)

Theoretical training and methodological training form a systematic and theoretically uniform whole.

The minimum scope of theoretical and methodological training is 70 credits (=1,890 working hours), of which:

- a) a minimum 30 credits (= 400 hours of seminar sessions and 400 hours of direct preparation, i.e. a total of 800 working hours) of theory seminars and clinical seminars. Seminar training may include a maximum of 60 hours of lectures.
- b) 40 credits (1,080 hours) of other theory and methodological training as follows:
 - familiarisation with literature readings, periodical assignments and other independent studies included in the study program
 - literature requirements combined with special level training consist of a minimum of 5,000 pages of essential material relating to the relevant school of psychotherapy, its scientific basis and effectiveness, as well as literature discussing general psychotherapy theory ^[5]
 - thesis: a demanding written project on a special issue in the relevant school of psychotherapy requiring extensive research with the aim of applying a scientific method (qualitative or quantitative), and related supervised work and revision.

Psychotherapeutic patient work (not included in credits)

The number of the therapy cases treated during training depends on the school of psychotherapy in use.

A total of at least 600 hours of psychotherapeutic patient work in accordance with the relevant psychotherapy school is required during training.

Supervised psychotherapy treatment (15 credits)

Supervised psychotherapy treatment shall account for at least 15 credits (= 200 hours of supervised work and 200 hours of preparation, i.e. a total of 400 hours).

Supervisors shall be registered as advanced special level psychotherapist in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs.

Personal psychotherapy (5 - 20 credits)

Depending on school of psychotherapy, the training shall include 5 – 20 credits (140 – 500 hours) of personal psychotherapy relating to the psychotherapy school in question. For certain schools, the requirement may be higher but no more than 20 credits may count toward the training.

The psychotherapists are required to hold an advanced special level psychotherapy degree in the relevant school of psychotherapy as entered in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs.

II Two-stage training model for advanced special level training (VET)

Trainee selection criteria.

Trainees are required to be qualified as special level psychotherapists in the school of psychotherapy in question as entered in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs.

Special level psychotherapy training and advanced special level psychotherapy training shall be completed in such a manner that a period of no more than ten years separates the two sets of training.

All trainees shall also be able to do psychotherapeutic work during training and show individual aptitude (based on an interview).

Content and scope of training (90 credits)

Training shall be a continuous special level training of a minimum of 3 years (the minimum requirements are described above) followed by a 2-year advanced special level psychotherapy training in the same psychotherapy school which, combined with special level training, are worth a minimum of 90 credits (2,430 hours).

Training shall form a systematic, comprehensive and process-nature whole and it shall include training to teach psychotherapy.

Overall work includes^[6]:

- seminars and the required preparation (e.g. study of the literature to be covered)
- supervision and preparations (excluding, however, the actual therapy sessions)
- personal psychotherapy (minimum duration required in training)
- writing of thesis

Theoretical and methodological education (70 credits)

Theoretical training and methodological training form a systematic and theoretically uniform whole.

The minimum scope of theoretical and methodological training is 70 credits (=1,890 working hours), of which:

- a) seminar training included in the special level psychotherapy training (ET) counts for a maximum of 15 credits (= 200 hours of seminar sessions and 200 hours of direct preparation, i.e. a total of 400 working hours). Seminar training may include a maximum of 30 hours of lectures.
- b) In addition, advanced special level psychotherapy training stage (VET) shall include a minimum 15 credits (= 200 hours of theory seminars and 200 hours of required preparation, i.e. a total of 400 working hours) of theory seminars and clinical seminars. Seminar training may include a maximum of 30 hours of lectures.

30 credits (= 400 hours of theory seminars and 400 hours of required preparation, i.e. a total of 800 working hours) of seminar training in both stages combined (ET+VET) is required. Seminar training can include a maximum of 60 hours of lectures.

c) In addition, advanced special level psychotherapy training shall include 40 credits (1,080 hours) of other theoretical and methodological training as follows:

- familiarisation with literature readings, periodical assignments and other independent studies included in the study program
- literature requirements include a minimum of 5,000 pages of essential material relating to the relevant school of psychotherapy, its scientific basis and effectiveness, as well as literature discussing general psychotherapy theory [\[7\]](#). 3,000 pages may be covered during the special level training stage.
- thesis: a demanding written project on a special issue in the relevant school of psychotherapy requiring extensive research, with the aim of applying a scientific method (qualitative or quantitative), and related supervised work and revision.

Psychotherapeutic patient work (not included in credits)

The number of the therapy cases treated during training depends on the school of psychotherapy in use.

A total of at least 600 hours of psychotherapeutic patient work in accordance with the relevant psychotherapy school is required during training, of which a minimum of 250 hours shall be completed during advanced special level training.

Supervised psychotherapy treatment (15 credits)

Supervised psychotherapy training completed during special level psychotherapy training (ET) may count for a maximum of 7.5 credits (= 100 hours of supervised work and 100 hours of preparation, i.e. a total of 200 hours).

Advanced special level training (VET) shall include at least 7.5 credits (= 100 hours of supervised psychotherapy treatment and 100 hours of preparation, i.e. a total of 200 hours working hours) of supervised psychotherapy treatment.

15 credits (= 200 hours of theory seminars and 200 hours of required preparation, i.e. a total of 400 working hours) of supervised psychotherapy training in both stages combined (ET +VET) is required.

Supervisors shall be registered as advanced special level psychotherapists in the Central Register of Health Care Professional of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs.

Personal psychotherapy (minimum 5 - 20 credits)

Depending on the school of psychotherapy, personal psychotherapy relating to the relevant school of psychotherapy completed during special level training (ET) can count for a maximum of 3 – 10 credits (= 80 – 250 hours).

Depending on the school of psychotherapy, the advanced special level training (VET) stage shall include 2 – 10 credits (60 – 250 hours) of personal psychotherapy relating to the relevant school of psychotherapy.

5 - 20 credits (= 140 – 500 hours) of psychotherapy training in both stages combined (ET+VET) is required. Depending on the school of psychotherapy, the requirements may include more credits, but can account for a maximum of 20 credits.

The psychotherapist is required to hold an advanced special level psychotherapy degree in the relevant school of psychotherapy as entered in the Central Register of Health Care Professionals of the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs.

In addition to special level and advanced special level training approved by the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs, a few training organizations have offered so-called higher special training. Regarding advanced special level training, the situation is unestablished as to which parts of the so-called higher special level training these training organizations acknowledge as part of advanced special level training. Final discretion lies with the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs regardless of the views of the training organization. The second part of advanced special level training shall always be at least two years of duration.

APPLICATION

These requirements will be applicable for approving psychotherapy training started after 1 June 2006.

The 1997 criteria and, when applicable, the currently approved qualification criteria will be applied to training started before 1 June 2006.

[1] Credits in psychotherapy training requirements are calculated according to the credit calculation guidelines for university studies:

- 1 credit equals 27 working hours
- writing a thesis requires 40 hours for 8 pages
- preparing for supervision requires 1 hour of note-taking for each supervision hour
- preparing for theoretical training requires, in addition to reading the literature, 1 hour of other preparation for each theory hour

[2] The care or psychotherapy work required in the training is not included in the credits although it is a fundamental part of psychotherapy training.

[3] According to a pedagogical study, the average reading speed of demanding literature is 3 – 10 pages per hour.

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[6] The care or psychotherapy work required in the training is not included in the credits although it is a fundamental part of psychotherapy training.

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