**Leeds Institute of**

**Health Sciences**

FACULTY OF MEDICINE

AND HEALTH



**Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL) for students of Family Therapy and Systemic Practice at University of Leeds**

The Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (AFT), the professional body which accredits Family Therapy and Systemic Practice Courses at University of Leeds, has produced guidelines for the accreditation of prior experience and learning or APEL in relation to the training of family therapists entitled The Association for Family Therapy Training in Family and Systemic Psychotherapy Entry Requirements.

This document describes the policy as it is applied at University of Leeds and should be read in conjunction with the original document with can be found on the

**APEL procedures are used in two instances for some students during training:**

1. **APEL – Entry to Intermediate Level course by demonstrating equivalence to Foundation level training**

APEL is used here to allow students who have not completed an AFT Accredited Foundation Course in Family Therapy (1st year of the four year training) to join the Intermediate Course (2nd year of four year training) if they have completed alterative but equivalent training in content and hours to a Foundation Level training. This may be as part of another professional training such as a specialist systemic year on a Doctorate of Clinical Psychology training.

The applicant must complete the APEL (Equivalence to Foundation Course) Document, which outlines the applicant’s previously assessed, certified or experiential learning in systemic theory and practice and demonstrates the extent to which they consider this learning to fulfil the learning outcomes of the Foundation Level Training as set out on the form.

The case for equivalence should be supported by documentary evidence of both learning and experience such as statements of course content, attendance certificates, assessed work, confirmation of supervised practice, published work etc.

It should be noted that the Foundation course is a Foundation in systemic theory and practice and is the usual starting point of training for professionals who often have many years of experience in working with families.

1. **APEL- Professional qualification - for applicants to all levels of systemic or family therapy training who do not have a prior professional training and qualification which has been recognised by AFT as fulfilling the requirement to have sufficient knowledge of the following areas:** 
   * Developmental psychology
   * Adult and child mental health
   * Working in and with public sector services including health and social care systems, multi-disciplinary teams and contexts
   * Managing risk

The following professional qualifications are currently considered to fulfil these requirements, (AFT Blue Book 4th Edition)

* + Psychology – Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology and Counselling Psychology qualifications are considered relevant.
  + Social Work – The generic professional qualification is sufficient whichever training route was undertaken (e.g. Undergraduate, postgraduate, or the employment based without an academic award attached). It is noted that social work is now a graduate profession.
  + Psychiatry and other medical specialities – For qualifying level training Speciality Training Registrar level or staff grade is required.
  + Teaching – Where individuals have had substantial experience in which they have worked with pupils and families in a counselling capacity.
  + Nursing – Mental health nursing and other nursing specialities which require counselling skills. It is also noted that nursing is now a graduate profession.
  + Arts Therapists (Art, Dance and Movement and Music Therapists), qualified and registered with the Health Professions Council.
  + Counselling – three year minimum training, full BACP accredited membership (MBACP Accred.)and experience in the public or voluntary sector is considered essential to establish equivalence.
  + Occupational Therapy – qualified and registered with Health Professions Council.
  + Speech and Language Therapy – qualified and registered with the Health Professions Council.

In order to widen participation in learning the systemic practice and family therapy course welcome students who work with families but may not fulfil the requirement of having a professional qualification as stated above. In this case a student may be admitted to the course by the usual application procedure but will be informed upon acceptance to the course (Foundation or Intermediate Level) that progression to the qualifying level of training may entail additional requirement. The course team can advise on likely additional requirements to fulfil APEL progression to qualifying level training.

Where a student wishes to be considered for progression to the qualifying level courses without a relevant professional training and qualification, the APEL Panel at LFTRC will review the application to the qualifying MSc level course. The panel will require the applicant to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and experience in the four areas outlined above that can usually be assumed to be gained from a professional training. If the applicant is required to undertake further study or gain experience the Panel would make recommendations to the applicant about courses of study and areas of experience to be completed and one of the following outcomes is given:

* The applicant is considered to meet the requirements for professional APEL and their application is progressed for review by course admissions.
* The applicant is considered to require further training or experience to be undertaken before their application can be progressed for review by course admissions. This would usually require the student to defer their application to undertake additional training or gain the experience needed.
* The applicant may be required to undertake additional learning or experience in parallel to their application being progressed and study on the MSc Systemic Family Therapy. This would usually be for relatively small areas of learning and / or gaining of experience, which could be achieved during the course of MSC Systemic Family Therapy study without overly burdening the student. The application is then progressed for review by course admissions.

All students admitted under APEL processes are hereby made aware that some employers require Systemic Family Therapist post holders to be dual qualified and as an APEL qualified Systemic Family Therapist, they may not be considered eligible to apply for some posts. This situation is changing but it is important that applicants are aware of this potential limitation on post qualification employment.

All APEL decisions will be available for the scrutiny of the AFT Course Accreditation Committee.

The AFT Blue Book and the AFT APEL Statement are available on the AFT website at: [AFT Website](https://www.aft.org.uk/)