

Course Handbook

2023 – 2024



Alexander Technique Centre Amsterdam
– Teacher Training Course –

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Students and teachers 2019

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1 Introduction

For over one hundred years since FM Alexander began teaching his technique, the work has been passed on from teachers of the generation closely associated with him personally to the next generation. In the last years of his life Alexander entrusted the running of his teacher training course to Walter Carrington with whom Tessa Marwick and Paul Versteeg trained, qualifying in London in 1983.

Paul and Tessa's teacher training course is a continuum of this tradition and is based on their experience of the approach developed by Walter and Dylis Carrington, their own experience of 24 years of training Alexander teachers in Amsterdam and their lifetime involvement with Theatre, Education and the Performing Arts.

The course is officially recognized and operates within the constitution and guidelines set down by the Nederlandse Vereniging van Leraren in de Alexander Techniek (NeVLAT) and by all international societies of the Alexander Technique affiliated under ATAS.



2 Course overview

The Teacher Training Course is a 4-day training course over a period of 3 years with a minimum of 1600 hours tuition spread over 9 terms.

Depending on availability, we can also offer a 3-day program over an extended period to fulfill the requirements for certification.

There are three terms per year. Each term consists of two blocks of 5 weeks, with a 2 week break in between. There are approximately 30 weeks per year.

The course timetable runs **Monday-Thursday** from **10:00-13:00** (see Appendix 1 for term dates).

The course consists of 75% practical (1280 hours) and 25% theoretical work (320 hours).

On satisfactory completion of the course a certificate is awarded authorizing the graduate to teach the Alexander Technique and become eligible to be a teaching member of NeVLAT and other International Affiliated Societies (ATAS).

At the discretion of the directors there is a possibility for a [post-graduate](#) teaching term at the training course.

Tuition is in both **English** and **Dutch**. **Spanish**, **German** and **French** are spoken as well.

3 Course contents

The course work focuses on enabling each student to understand, both in practice and theory, the three key elements of the Alexander Technique: Inhibition, Direction and Primary Movement. The three year course is structured as follows:

The **first year** of the training the core-work is primarily devoted to learning to improve one's own self-awareness and 'manner of use'. It involves a process of change and individual development, which builds the foundation for the use of our hands and our interaction with others in teaching.

In the **second year**, as the growing awareness of the 'use' of the self continues, the focus is on the development and ability to maintain this process while working with each other. At the same time as the understanding of the work deepens more refined skills and procedures as to the use of the hands with verbal guidance for passing on the Alexander Technique are learnt.

In the **third year** the confidence to teach the practical aspects of the Alexander Technique are built. The students progress from practicing on each other to supervised practice on members of the public. The student's continuing self-improvement, knowledge, skills and individual expression developed over the previous years is put into practice in this situation.

Throughout the three years, the group work with movement and voice work is an integral element, embracing and interweaving the core-work. This form of interaction between the individual and the group is used as a preparation for presenting and speaking about the Technique in one's own individual style, with confidence and openness.



If there is any change in the curriculum or the course philosophy as laid down in the course handbook, the directors agree to have a full discussion with the students before such changes are implemented.

Weekly program

During each week a student has:

- ❖ At least one individual short lesson (20 min.) every day. A teacher-student ratio of at least 1-5 is maintained throughout the week and Paul and Tessa are present every day.
- ❖ Two or three half-hour 'hands-on' groups per week (usually three students per group). The student learns through a step-by-step program how to use the hands on each other while under the guidance of an experienced teacher. It is a well worked-out discipline, like a musician learning scales, and it is the heart of the whole training. It becomes the foundation from which more complex skills can develop.



- ❖ Some form of 'directed activity' or established procedure every day. e.g. chair work, table work, whispered 'Ah', standing, walking, waiting, sitting, squatting, lying down and rising etc. Or a natural and playful group work with either movement or voice work developed from out of Alexander's principles.
- ❖ A lecture/discussion period every day, covering the essence of Alexander's books, related literature, anatomy and physiology. Students have access to a substantial library of relevant books, articles, and DVD's.
- ❖ Guest teachers with considerable teaching experience are invited on subjects such as medicine, sport, music, voice, working with children etc.
- ❖ Students are expected to work on themselves both during and outside course hours.

4 Entry to training course

There are no formal requirements except for some personal experience of the Alexander Technique. People genuinely interested are invited to visit the course for one or more days.

New students can join the training course at any time throughout the year but preferably at the start of a new term. We offer a carefully planned program so that everyone covers all the ground necessary during a three-year cycle.

For the current timetable, see www.atca.nl.

5 Assessment

In accordance with NeVLAT rules, acceptance on the course in no way implies automatic qualification. It is the responsibility of the directors and the course moderator to determine whether each student has reached a satisfactory standard at the end of his/her training. Any student who has not reached qualifying standards by the end of training for example through extensive absence, may undergo further training at the student's own expense, on consultation with the directors and moderator.

Theoretical and practical skills are assessed in an on-going way, involving internal and external assessors. The moderation checklist is listed in Appendix 3. An independent

Moderator, the two course directors and several experienced teachers from within and outside the course assess the student's progress.

Of the 1600 hours over three years, 320 hours will be allocated to guided and approved independent study. This can take many forms. For example:

- Keeping a journal of your experiences during the training.
- Applying the Alexander Technique to the study of another skill.
- Preparing material (in the later part of the course) for giving talks on the Technique, advertising yourself as a teacher, presenting introductory workshops etc.

During the training, the student is expected to give a 'talk' (presentation) at the end of each year.

- ❖ The first year presentation relates to the personal developments of the student of their Alexander Technique experiences of the past year.
- ❖ The second year presentation is on their understanding and practical experience of Alexander concepts such as inhibition, direction, primary control, sensory appreciation etc.
- ❖ During the third year there is a short anatomy talk in relation to our general 'use and functioning', in an area of personal interest.
- ❖ The graduation includes a final presentation of the Alexander Technique, in a student's own style and words, for an invited audience. The student expresses all the acquired knowledge and understanding of the past three years.

The directors and the moderator will of course make every effort during the process of on-going assessment, to warn the student who may need extra time to qualify during the beginning of the ninth term. The directors also reserve the right to ask a student to leave at any time during the training if the student's conduct, attendance or progress is clearly unsatisfactory. It is up to the directors to clearly inform a student about the necessary progress to be made.

All personal and corporate information given to the training course, its employees and teachers by the students, will be dealt with confidentially within the training course and will not be shared with third parties. There is a pledge of secrecy of the course directors towards the students.

Moderator

The ATCA moderator since 20 years is José Peeters, a highly skilled teacher with over 44 years of experience both inside and outside of the training course. José moderates each student in their 6th and 9th term and writes a report of their progress. These reports will be destroyed after their qualification.



6 Literature

The students have access to a wide range of relevant books, articles, CD's and DVD's in the library. During the training, students are obliged to buy five books: *The Use of the Self* (F.M. Alexander), *Think Aloud* and *The Act of Living* (Walter Carrington) and *The Alexander Technique in Everyday Activity* (Sean Carey) and *The Body in Motion* (Ted Dimon). The total cost of the literature during the whole course amounts to approximately EUR 140.

Also recommended are the other 3 books by F.M. Alexander: *Mans Supreme Inheritance*, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* and *The Universal Constant in Living*, as well as 'An Evolution of the Alexander Technique' by Walter & Dilys Carrington.

7 Attendance

The course is of three years continuous training, with a minimum of 1600 training hours. Trainees are not expected to take large amounts of time off unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the student has been absent for a considerable amount of time (six weeks or more over the three years), a 'catch up' period of at minimum the same length and the payment of additional fees for this period, is automatically required to complete certification.

If for any reason the student has to take a whole term off e.g. the birth of a baby or a serious illness they will need to do a 'catch-up' term to fulfil certification requirements. In that case no extra fees will be charged.

8 Qualification

The training course is approved by NeVLAT (Nederlandse Vereniging van Leraren in de Alexander-Techniek). NeVLAT is an approved member of the Alexander Technique Affiliated Societies (ATAS). Students qualifying from the training course will receive NeVLAT Certification as Alexander Teachers and be eligible to become members of all Affiliated Societies worldwide.

It is also a condition that all trainees must undertake not to hold themselves out as Alexander Teachers, nor to teach the Alexander Technique, except under approved supervision, until they have qualified from the training course and have been certified by NeVLAT.

The Alexander Teacher Training course is not intended to replace medical, psychiatric or psychotherapeutic treatment for the course participant. Nor is it intended to replace professional training in those fields.

9 Postgraduate students

We are happy to take post-graduate students whenever there is space available from a few days to a term or more. They will be included in the daily timetable as full time students and receive attention adapted to their level of experience. The main focus is on acquiring experience as an independent Alexander teacher.

10 Tuition fees

The fees for the **4-day training course** are 7.500 Euro per year or 2.500 Euro per term (as of January 1, 2018). The first term always is to be paid in full and upfront, after that monthly payments of 625 Euro are possible. There are 3 terms per year and 9 terms in total.

The fees for the **3-day training course** over a more extended period are 5640 Euro per year or 1880 Euro per term (as of January 1, 2018). The first term always is to be paid in full and upfront, after that monthly payments of 470 Euro are possible.

Although every effort will be made to keep the fees down, they may rise periodically (though not every year) in line with inflation. Any change will be announced at least one term in advance.

If for any reason the student discontinues training mid-term, the balance of the term's fees are not refundable. In case of monthly payments, the full term needs to be paid and the training cannot be discontinued any single month.

If a student wishes to leave the training course notice must be given to the directors **six weeks before the last day of the current term**.

All fees are payable before the first day of each term or at the start of each year.

Visitors' fees are 60 euro per day.

Fees for post-graduate teachers are 60 euro per day.

ATCA is registered by the CRKBO and is therefore exempt from VAT.

11 Location

The training course no longer takes place at Herengracht 340 and has been moved to Javakade 510 since May 2020. It is close to Central Station and easily accessible by tramline 26, or bus 48. There is parking available in front of the building, at a reduced rate (€1,60 per hour).



12 Student membership of NeVLAT

NeVLAT (the Dutch Society of Alexander Teachers) requires all trainees to become student members of the Society, and pay the appropriate fees. These are 2x €75 (total €150 for the duration of the entire training course) and are invoiced after every 'moderation'. This amount includes the fee for the moderation itself.

The student will automatically receive all rights and duties of the Society as laid down in the Constitution. Also he/she will receive the NeVLAT news and will be able to participate in (student) workshops organized by NeVLAT.

13 Questions and complaints

Student's questions concerning administration or education and the student's progress will be answered decisively by the directors as soon as possible, but ultimately within two weeks. The request will be handled confidentially. The questions and complaints will be registered and filed until the student's qualification.

If students have any complaints about the course, which they cannot solve with the course directors they can contact the independent course moderator, José Peeters, who will deal with the request within three weeks. If more time is required for the investigation the student will be notified of this within two weeks, with an explanation of the reasons of the delay. In this case a decisive answer will be given within four weeks.

If the complaint cannot be solved satisfactorily students are referred to the complaints commission of NeVLAT. More information can be accessed through the NeVLAT-site www.nevlat.nl. The NeVLAT's final decision will be binding for ATCA; any consequences will be dealt with by ATCA within two weeks.

14 Course Directors

The course directors are Tessa Marwick en Paul Versteeg. The course directors are responsible for ensuring that the students receive a sound and coherent training according principles as outlined in F. Matthias Alexander's four books, and the NeVLAT constitution and bylaws.

The directors will be present at least 75 % during course time and are responsible for adequate teaching during possible absence.

In case of cessation of the training course, notice will be given to the students at least 1 term in advance and the directors will make



every effort for finding suitable transfers to other recognized training courses for each student.

15 Copyrights

The copyrights of the teacher training course of the Alexander Technique Centre Amsterdam (ATCA) remain with the course directors, Tessa Marwick and Paul Versteeg.

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Appendix 1

ATCA schedule

The up-to-date schedule is only published online and can be found at:
<https://www.atca.nl/en/teacher-training/course-time-table/>

Appendix 2

Daily timetable

ATCA daily timetable Monday – Thursday, 10.00am - 13.00pm

| Time | Contents |
|-------------|---|
| 10.00-11.00 | Short individual lessons (20 min.) to students by Paul, Tessa & present teachers. |
| 11.00-11.30 | Application of Alexander principles to a daily activity like walking, lifting, squatting, writing, reading, speaking etc. <i>or</i> Partner and/or Group work with movement for special awareness <i>or</i> Practicing part of Alexander's 5 basic procedures <i>or</i> Vocal work |
| 11.40-12.00 | Break |
| 12.00-12.40 | 'Hands-on' in groups of about 3 students guided by Paul and Tessa and other ATCA teachers |
| 12.40-13.00 | Theoretical part: reading and discussing FM Alexander and Walter Carrington's books and related literature together under guidance of Paul and Tessa <i>or</i> Once per season 9 weekly anatomy/physiology talks by Gilles Rullman or one of the guest teachers specialised in e.g. music, sports, medicine etc. |

Appendix 3

Moderators' Checklist

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|-------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-----|----------------------|-----|-------|---------|-------|
| <p>Presentation and Use</p> <p>Own Use</p> <p>□□□</p> <p>Explanation</p> <p>□□□</p> <p>Observation</p> | <p>Understanding</p> <p>Use and Functioning Primary Control Inhibition Direction End-gaining Means-whereby Non-doing Faulty sensory appreciation Psychophysical unity Force of habit FM's life & books History of Technique Giving and withholding consent</p> | <p>Practical Skills</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Hands</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Words</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Chair</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Table</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Monkey</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Chair Back</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">---</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Whispered ah & Voice</td> <td style="text-align: center;">---</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Walking</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-----</td> </tr> </table> | Hands | | Words | ----- | Chair | ----- | ----- | Table | ----- | ----- | Monkey | ----- | ----- | Chair Back | ----- | --- | Whispered ah & Voice | --- | ----- | Walking | ----- |
| Hands | | Words | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ----- | Chair | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ----- | Table | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ----- | Monkey | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ----- | Chair Back | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | Whispered ah & Voice | --- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ----- | Walking | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>This is a list of the minimum requirements for the assessment of students</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">What?</p> <p>Moderators should look for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the ability to keep inhibition and directions going while teaching; 2. clarity of explanation; 3. on-going work on themselves and expectation of change; 4. the necessity for teaching pupils to work on themselves; 5. How they see their role as a teacher. | <p style="text-align: center;">Why?</p> <p>These items represent the core of Alexander's teaching. Other items may be added at the discretion of the Moderator. See →□ →</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Extras</p> <p>If the Moderator, with the agreement of the Head of Training, wishes to examine the student's proficiency in any other area or procedure of the work, this may be done. This could involve application work or specific procedures (e.g. crawling).</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |