

# External Accreditation of Psychoanalytic Training Programs: Why and How

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## External Accreditation: Why?

Psychoanalysis today is both a sub-specialty of several established mental health professions and an emerging independent profession. Within psychoanalysis we find varied approaches and educational traditions. We are all challenged to establish and implement unified standards of education within this diversity

### ➤ Unified external accreditation for analysts who are mental health professionals

- Varied clinical approaches and training traditions within psychoanalytic community requires us to achieve broad agreement about essential elements
- Psychoanalysis – as transfusion medicine – is a subspecialty of several recognized health care professions. Training across disciplines is appropriate and efficient
- Accreditation by an independent agency assures our peers, prospective students and the public that a program provides suitable training in the core elements of psychoanalytic theory and practice, and an introduction to research in these areas

### ➤ Unified external accreditation can encompass Psychoanalysis as an emerging new health care profession

- A single set of comprehensive core standards can assure uniformity within the expanding diversity of contemporary Psychoanalysis

### ➤ Who accredits Psychoanalytic training programs

- Membership Organizations:
  - American Psychoanalytic Association (APsA) has a mechanism to approve institutes that meet its particular standards
  - International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) has processes to recognize institutes that conform with one of its training models
- Specialty Boards: e.g., APsAP assesses on a case by case basis whether applicants who trained informally or in another institute fulfilled its requirements
- Independent Agencies
  - American Board for Accreditation in Psychoanalysis, Inc.
  - Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.

## DISCLOSURE

The authors of this poster are Trustees of the Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.

## Accreditation Council For Psychoanalytic Education (ACPEinc)

- An autonomous not-for-profit corporation established in 2001 by The Psychoanalytic Consortium to implement the Standards of Psychoanalytic Education it had delineated and that all of its member associations had ratified

### ➤ MISSION

- To protect the public by evaluating and accrediting psychoanalytic training programs in the United States
- To promote excellence in psychoanalytic education
- The ACPEinc provides **accreditation across theoretical boundaries and training traditions**
- **ACPEinc Definition of PSYCHOANALYSIS** . . . a specific form of individual psychotherapy that aims to bring understanding of unconscious mental processes, enhance adaptation in multiple spheres of functioning, alleviate symptoms of mental disorder, and facilitate character change and emotional growth . . . Psychoanalytic work is characterized by **depth and intensity** which are achieved in the context of **frequent** treatment sessions over a **long term**

### Why should an institute seek ACPEinc accreditation?

- An institute that adheres to the Standards of Psychoanalytic Education will have the high quality of its program endorsed by an external, independent agency
- The **self study** that forms the essential basis of the application allows an institute to review for itself the extent to which it meets its own stated objectives
- The triadic process of **site visit** and **consultation** and **reporting** affords an institute opportunities to view itself in the eyes of colleagues from other parts of the country, providing **affirmation** and a **basis for continuing self-improvement**
- University affiliated program immediately gain status equal to that of other advanced (postgraduate) programs, which customarily are required to gain accreditation by their relevant independent review agency
- Eventually, ACPEinc accreditation supports efforts of both free standing institutes and university affiliated programs to offer psychoanalytic training as a subspecialty Fellowship – or as education for a new health care profession. **ACPEinc accreditation consolidates the position of Psychoanalysis in the world of academic professional training . . . creating bridges across professional divides**
- **Advantages to candidates**
  - ACPEinc accreditation offers current and prospective candidates assurance that the institute provides appropriately for their training needs . . .
  - Mental health professionals gain the possibility of supported training Fellowships – grants, loan forgiveness, etc
  - Candidates who are not members of a core mental health profession – or who choose separate licensing as a psychoanalyst – are more likely to practice psycho-analysis autonomously after graduation, even in restrictive regulatory environments

## Example of Accreditation Process

What is evaluated? How is this done?

The ACPEinc **Standards of Psychoanalytic Education** document delineates **model core standards** by which institutes seeking accreditation as a psychoanalytic education and training center will be evaluated

- Application
  - Institute completes Self-Study exercise to determine that its mission comports with ACPEinc model core standards . . . assess readiness for accreditation and addresses possible shortcomings . . . May consult with an ACPEinc liaison . . . Documents findings in Self-Study Worksheet
  - ACPEinc receives formal application and does **initial review** . . . If documentation is complete → site visit
- Site visit aims to answer **salient question**: How well does the institute implement its own goals – adhere to its professed views?
  - Team: 3 or more psychoanalysts including at least one ACPEinc Trustee. Often also a public Trustee who represents consumers of psychoanalytic education
  - Site visit includes
    - **Documents**: Policies, procedures, etc. including Academic Programs, Student affairs – admissions and progression – Associated Personnel, Related Activities: library, clinic, research, continuing education, community activities and involvement
    - General **administrative** review
    - **Meetings** with governing board, other institute leaders and administrators
    - **Observation** of classes, case conferences, supervision
    - **Meetings** with students and faculty
    - **Informal consultation** with Institute leaders at close of visit
- Site visit reports
  - Preliminary: format follows ACPEinc Standards – shared with Institute within 6 weeks of visit – Institute may respond and provide new information
  - Final report reviewed by Chair of ACPEinc Standing Committee on Accreditation of Institutes – forwarded to Board of Trustees for action
  - Institute notified of decision of ACPEinc Board within 30 days of meeting . . .
- Accreditation by ACPEinc is publicized – web sites, etc.

## MORE INFORMATION

For general information, Mission Statement, Bylaws, etc. and free downloadable Self Study Worksheets, Application form and various links . . . You may go to

[www.ACPEinc.org](http://www.ACPEinc.org)