



December 2, 2015

Revisions to the Peer Reviewed Trainer Criteria

Distribution: Training Committee, ACBS Board, Peer Reviewed Trainers Community, Past Presidents Group

Dear Colleagues,

The training committee would like to inform the community about some changes being made to the process for applying to be a peer reviewed ACT trainer. These changes will go into effect on January 15, 2016. They have been carefully considered, and arise from what we have learned by working with the current application materials over time. David Gillanders, previous Training Committee Chair, provided a nice background summary and description of these changes when they were proposed to the Trainers Community in February of 2015. I have included (with some additions) his summary below:

Introduction and Context

It has become clear that there are aspects of the peer review process that are considered important but are not well defined. In particular, the requirement for applicants to be well versed in the basic science and philosophy that underpin ACT: behaviour analysis, relational frame theory and functional contextualism.

The peer reviewers rate these core areas of the application, along three dimensions: knowledge of, ability to train others in, and use of, these in training. While we require these competencies in the review, many applicants have trouble showing them clearly. These changes to the required criteria are designed to make this basic underpinning more explicit, and to provide more detailed guidance and support material to help applicants demonstrate the requirements clearly. In summary, the revisions to the criteria/process are as follows:

1. The addition of a 6th criterion to the 5 existing criteria (1. Agree to the list of values and principles for ACT Trainers, 2. Have a terminal degree in a relevant behavioral field, 3. Be known to be of good character, 4. Be highly effective in the core skills and competencies of an ACT therapist, 5. Be highly effective in training others in ACT):

6. The applicant has a good working knowledge of the basic science and philosophy that underpin ACT vis-a-vis- behavior analysis, relational frame theory, and functional contextualism.
2. This criterion creates a clearer separation in the review form amongst ACT, RFT, and FC, which have previously been presented together in many instances (e.g., “The applicant is an ongoing learner [attends professional development conferences and continues to seek continuing education related to ACT/RFT/FC]). This means that reviewers will now assess competencies in the three areas separately – ACT training related competencies, knowledge and use of FC, and knowledge and use of RFT.
3. We have developed a [resources page](#) in the training section of the ACBS website. This consists of support materials for applicants interested in learning more about RFT, FC, and BA. This curriculum will continue to be developed, and will include recommended readings, links to online tutorials and training videos.

4. We will now assess applicants' working knowledge of RFT and functional contextualism in the form of two short essay questions, to be selected from a list by each applicant and examined by Training Committee representatives with expertise in RFT. (The membership of the Committee always requires at least one member who undertakes basic RFT research).

An additional revision is the inclusion of rating criteria on the peer observation and peer review forms that specifically assess the trainer's ability to help others develop their ACT skills.

These changes are reflected in the *ACBS peer review application form*, the *peer observation rating form* and the *peer review form*. I have attached the new forms to this document. Attached as well are the marking criteria that will be used to assess applicants' essays.

Finally, as of Jan 15, 2016, we are **no longer accepting audio recordings** of trainings, etc. We felt this change was necessary to help our reviewers in their task of assessing the training samples submitted by applicants. Conducting these reviews is time-consuming and can be challenging for a multitude of reasons – working with audiotapes makes a difficult task all the harder. If there are extenuating circumstances such that an applicant can submit only an audio recording, he/she can contact the Training Committee (via Ashley Zebell) and request an exemption from this requirement.

We are providing a 6-week lead-time before implementing these changes on January 15, 2016. This is so individuals who have nearly completed their application materials may proceed as they have anticipated. We recognize however, that regardless of the date chosen for implementation, there may be individuals planning on applying who find they now need to fulfill a requirement they did not expect. For this, we ask for your understanding and patience. **Anyone who has already submitted their application materials to Ashley Zebell, or who will do so before January 15, 2016, will be exempt from the new competency requirements.** During the six week lead-time, both old and new forms will be available on the website. Any applications submitted after January 15, 2016 will need to incorporate the new *ACBS peer review application form*. **If applicants have already obtained a training observation using the "old" observation form**, they may submit that observation form in their application materials, even if that is after January 15, 2016. Any training observations that are conducted *after* January 15, 2016 should incorporate the new observation form. And of course, if applicants wish to employ the new forms before January 15, 2016, they are welcome to do so!

As Training Committee Chair, I would like to thank the committee members, past and present, who contributed to this effort. While I happen to be in the position to announce the realization of this initiative, it is the culmination of others' vision, commitment, and hard work. A particular shout-out is in order for David Gillanders and Ashley Zebell for their work on this. Thank you both.

Warmest regards,

Darrah Westrup

ACBS Training Committee Chair