Alexander Technique Teacher Training Manual
Alexander Technique Helsinki OSK (6.11.2025)

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Goals of the training
3. The structure of the training
4. Content of the training
5. Weekly schedule
6. Applying for training
7. Evaluation and feedback
8. Moderation
9. Literature used in the training
10. Presence
11. The cost of the training
12. Location of the training course
13. Student membership in the Finstat association
14. Training course teachers
15. School calendar
16. Training contract

1. Introduction

Alexander Technique teachers have been trained since 1930, first in the UK and the USA, later in an expanding number of countries. In Finland, the first teachers qualified at the end of the 1990s. Currently in this country, in addition to Helsinki, teacher training is arranged in Tampere and Orivesi.

Soile Lahdenperä, Katri-Mari Ruonala and Laura Partanen provide a teacher training course for Alexander Technique teachers in Helsinki; all three of them have over 20 years of experience in teaching the Alexander Technique.

The Alexander Technique Helsinki teacher training course is a vocational education approved and supervised by the Finnish Society of the Alexander Technique Teachers Finstat ry (www.finstat.fi) which later in this manual is abbreviated to Finstat.

The training course follows the guidelines issued for teacher training by Alexander Technique Affiliated Societies, which later in this manual is abbreviated to ATAS.
www.alexandertechniqueworldwide.org

According to the regulations of the Finstat and the minimum recommendations of the ATAS consortium, the external requirements of teacher training are defined as follows:

The duration of the education is at least 3 years and will include at least 1600 hours (each 60 minutes long) of contact teaching.
There are 4-5 school days per week, 12-20 hours per week, 3-4 hours of teaching per day.
The teacher-student ratio will be no more than 1:5.

The Alexander Technique Helsinki teacher training course adheres to operating principles above, as well as the ethical guidelines for Alexander Technique teachers:
Eettiset ohjeet - Suomen Alexander-tekniikan opettajat Finstat ry

2. Goals of training

The goal is to train Alexander Technique teachers who will be able to apply the skills they have learned in different areas of life as pedagogues and instructors by adopting a holistic view towards all kinds of everyday tasks. Teaching skills are adaptable; for example, they can be applied in the areas of exercise, arts, education and rehabilitation. During the training, topics related to interaction, discussion, teaching skills and ethics are also covered.

The Alexander Technique teacher training is a three-year professional training. Its aim is to prepare teachers with in-depth and practical knowledge and understanding;
- of cultivated awareness skills
- of the indivisible whole of the human being
- of functional anatomy
- on the key concepts and literature underpinning the Alexander Technique
- on the principles underpinning the use of the self (inhibition, direction, primary control etc.)
- on the use of guiding hands in the teaching process
- about the development of the Alexander Technique method and current research

The practical skills which the students will acquire will include the ability to
- direct their own activities as reliably as possible
- work independently to further advance their own use and personal development.
- verbally, and with the use of their hands, to direct and guide the actions of others, either as individuals or in groups.

3. The structure of the training

The duration of the training is a minimum of three years. In the Finnish educational system, the whole training corresponds to a degree course demanding a total of 180 study credits.

• 100 weeks of contact teaching = 146 credits
• 34 weeks of independent work = 34 credits

Each year consists of four periods of ten weeks, including eight weeks of contact teaching, private lessons, homework and two weeks of independent study. The training school can

be started at the beginning of each period, four times a year.
Contact teaching weeks include studying for 1,46 credits / week.
Independent work weeks include assignments worth 1 credit / week.

In addition to contact studies, the students are expected to complete homework exercises each week. These involve reading, reflection and practicing the skills of conscious guidance of the self. These tasks are conducted both during the contact periods and during the independent work weeks.

Each period also contains an independent larger task. These include various written works, book presentations, teaching lectures and demonstrations. The students can influence the way in which they perform these learning tasks. Tasks are given at the beginning of each period, and they are scheduled to be completed by the end of each period. The periods are implemented in such a way that the breaks from contact teaching are most typically scheduled during school vacations. During the summer break, students will receive a written task equivalent to approximately 2 credits.

The total number of contact teaching in the training is 1600 hours. (2133 lessons 45 min each) In addition to this, the training includes a private lesson in each of the 12 periods of the training as well as a regular review day and feedback discussions. In the final year of the training, the student completes a supervised teaching internship, which is approximately 4 credits in scope, including 30 hours of individual and group teaching.

4. Content of the training

Thematically, the three years of the training are divided as follows:

The focus of the first year's training is on building skills of awareness, use of the self and the internalization of the process of personal change.These activities form the foundation, from which can be constructed the later learned skill of guiding with hands and interacting with others in teaching situations.

In the second year, the "other" rises alongside the "self". How do I take care of myself while working with someone else? The second year deepens the student's theoretical understanding and practical skills of the use of guiding hands.

In the third year, the field of attention expands further; as a complement to the "me and the other" situation, one special goal is verbalization of the work. Trainees practice using guiding words while working; the student acquires the skills to bring the work out into the world.

5. Weekly schedule

The school week consists of one day of independent work and four days of contact teaching (usually from 9:30 to 13:45). The structure of the contact teaching days consists of the following:

- 45-minute guided activity
- 45-minute lecture / lesson / reading time / guided discussion
- 1-2 times each day 10 to 15 minutes of individual guidance from the teacher for each student
- hands-on guided practice
- time for independent work based on the principles learned
- 30 min meal break, of which 15 min are completely free for both the teacher and the students, and during the other 15 min, the teacher is available, and the time can be used to discuss issues of the training course.

The themes of the lectures are mostly related to the main concepts of the Alexander Technique and their application, the central literature of the Alexander Technique, human anatomy, as well as questions related to teaching the Technique. For the independent workday, students receive assignments the week before, including reading, practical applications, reflection and writing tasks.

6. Applying for training

The training can be started four times each year, at the beginning of each 10-week period.
The prerequisite for applying is approximately 30 private lessons or equivalent experience in the Alexander Technique, which can also be obtained from group teaching situations.
The applicant must complete the training course application.
The applicant will meet all the training course's teachers, will participate in an interview and demonstrate a realistic appreciation of what training entails in terms of time use/ availability, seriousness of commitment and finances.
The applicant has to have the prerequisite capabilities to undertake the training as well as the English language skills necessary to comprehend and participate in the studies.

One can also join the training course program as a separately paying student for intensive periods that can be arranged individually. In this case, a visiting student does not have to undertake the same assignments as those being done by students aiming to become a teacher, although this possibility is an option. However, these kinds of studies cannot automatically be counted as part of the teacher studies but must be agreed separately.

7. Evaluation and feedback

The student will receive daily feedback from the teachers in connection with the hands on-guidance. This form of personal feedback is a part of the private lessons as well as the feedback discussions which are an inherent feature of the training.

The students will receive feedback on their written work and oral assignments from the teachers and from time to time also from their fellow students. Students are also expected to undertake self-assessments during their studies.

The teachers in the training course also ensure that the students can give feedback at regular intervals about the structure of their studies with their assessment of teachers' performance. Time is reserved for this at the end of each period. In addition, the annual visit of Finstat's Training Course Committee provides an opportunity for discussion with experienced teachers who are not members of the training course and represent a channel for feedback as well as quality control of the course.

8. Moderation

The student will receive feedback after his/her/their meeting with an outside moderator of the training course once a year, initially orally and in the last two years also in writing. The moderator gives feedback from an outsider's perspective after discussions and hands on work with each student, taking into account the current phase of her/his/their studies. The moderator of the training course will be the Alexander Technique teacher Vertti Pöllänen, who has been teaching the Technique since 1999.

If necessary, the training can also last longer than three years, so that the skills to be learned have time to take root and become internalized. This is discussed together with the student and the moderator's perspective is also heard.

9. Literature used in education

During the training, several key books on the Alexander Technique are reviewed, which the student must acquire. These are
F.M. Alexander:
- The Use of the Self
- Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual
- The Universal Constant in Living

Walter Carrington: Thinking Aloud
Seán Carey: Think More Do Less
Ted Dimon: Body in Motion
Other books to be read will be agreed upon separately with the students.

10. Presence

Students can have 4 days of absence per year, i.e. one week per year.

If this is exceeded, the student can compensate for one week of absence per year by participating in another Alexander training (a possible summer course, a workshop organized by Finstat ry, or visiting another training course during their own training course's vacation). It is also possible to compensate for one week of absence per year by undertaking an additional written assignment. If the absence of three weeks in a year is exceeded and the compensatory performance has not been done, the student can always continue his/her/their studies after three years by paying for participation in new study periods. It should be emphasized that the student cannot graduate from the training course as a teacher until the required numbers of study days have been completed. However, studies can be continued for a longer period than the 3 years' minimum requirements. The student can also wish to continue his/her/their studies, even if the minimum requirement has already been achieved. Similarly, teachers can recommend continuing studies beyond the minimum requirement, so that the necessary skills for teaching have time to mature. This will be discussed together with the student and after taking into account also the moderator's perspective.

If the student participates in the Alexander Technique Helsinki courses before starting the actual training, this increases the time in the student's "absence bank" for the hours required in teacher training.

11. The cost of training

The price of the studies is 8800 €/year i.e. the total price of the three-year studies is 26,400 €. In addition to this, the student must become a student member of the Finstat ry (60 €/year at the moment). Mandatory book purchases cost a maximum of around 200 €/ for the entire three years of the training.

12. Location of the training course

The school is located in Kallio, Helsinki. It is easy to reach by public transport. The address is Itänen Brahenkatu 13 C.

13. Student membership in Finstat association and ATAS

The training is supervised by Finstat. The training course's students are expected to join the Finstat when they start their studies. Through this membership, they also belong to the wider ATAS (Alexander Technique Affiliated Societies) association which spans over 20 countries.

Via their membership (60 €/year), students will receive external monitoring of their training. The training course is visited annually both by a moderator and by representatives of the Training Course Committee, who guarantee the implementation of high-quality training. The Training Course Committee also keeps in regular contact with students via email.

After becoming a member, students also receive a membership mail from Finstat, and the right to participate in the courses and the annual meeting organized by the association. At the end of the training, in addition to his/her/their own training course's certificate, the student receives an international certificate, which states that he/she/they has the right not only to become a member of the ATAS consortium but also that he/she/they is qualified to teach in these countries.

14. Training course teachers

The training course's Heads of Training are Soile Lahdenperä and Katri-Mari Ruonala. Laura Partanen is the training course's assistant and is responsible for the training course's administration. In addition, it is likely that both Finnish and foreign teachers will visit the training course from time to time.

Soile has trained as an Alexander teacher in Brighton with John Nicholls in 1992-1995, Katri-Mari has trained in Brussels with Elisabeth Langford in 2000-2002 and Laura has trained in London with Walter Carrington in 1998-2000.

15. School calendar

Term I:
04.08. - 10.10.2025
Weeks of independent work::
04. - 08.08. (week 32) and 08. - 12.09. (week 37)
Term II:
13.10. - 19.12.2025
Weeks of independent work:
13.-17.10. (week 42, school autumn vacation) and November 17-21. (week 47)
Term III:
12.1. - 27.3.2025
Weeks of independent work:
12-16.1. (week 3) and 13-17.2. (week 9)
Term IV:
7.4. - 12.6.2025
Weeks of independent work:
7-10.4.(week 15) and 11-15.5. (week 20)

16. Training contract

A written agreement is made between the training course and the students at the start of the training. In the contract, the student promises that he/she/they will not start teaching the Alexander Technique without supervision until he/she/they has successfully completed the entire training course.

Student agreement to be filled in between the training course and the student

Alexander Technique Helsinki training course lasts a minimum three years. The academic year is divided into four periods. Each period has 8 weeks of contact teaching and 2 weeks of independent study. Each contact teaching week consists of four contact days, each lasting 4.25 hours including a lunch break. The first day of each week is also dedicated to independent study.
In addition, the training includes a private lesson in each period (four times a year) and a regular review day. Thus, there are 40 teaching weeks in a year, of which 33 are contact teaching weeks. This means that over the course's three years, teaching is scheduled for 120 weeks, of which 99 are actual contact teaching weeks.
There are at least 1 600 contact teaching lessons (60 minutes each) in the teacher training offered in Helsinki.

The student (name and date of birth) _____ and the respective trainers confirm with their signatures that they are bound by the following agreements:

Heads of Training undertake

1) to train the student in the Alexander Technique at the Helsinki training course for at least 3 years, providing a minimum of 1600 contact teaching hours (60 min each).

2) to keep the student informed about her/his/their progress. The trainers undertake to inform the student as early as possible, no later than 3 months before the expected graduation time, if it seems that the student will need extra study periods to graduate as a teacher.

3) to take care of the student's rights, ensure that all students receive equal treatment and the opportunity for open discussion and exchange of opinions.

4) to ensure that the quality and ethics of training are at a high level. The training course is committed to following the rules and ethical guidelines of Finstat ry.

5) to notify the student at least six months in advance if the training has to be terminated. The training course's operating conditions are also not fulfilled if there are less than 2 students enrolled in the training course. The trainers must primarily strive to fulfill the terms of this agreement and, secondarily, in the event of an insurmountable obstacle (such as an illness), together with the student, they will search for a training course where the studies can be continued.

6) keep any written material that mentions the student's personal information out of the reach of outsiders. The student has the right to find out what personal information is held by the training course and how it is being used.

The student undertakes

1) to participate in the daily training exercises in accordance with the training course's work schedule.

2) to report her/his/their absences as early as possible and to agree with the trainers on how these absences will be compensated if there are more than 4 of these days in one academic year.

3) The student undertakes to act in a way that promotes workplace peace and harmony in the training course and to raise any issues that prevent this from happening.

4) The student undertakes to notify at least 3 months in advance if his/her/their study plans are changing. This is only permissible in the event of illness or a comparable unexpected, insurmountable obstacle.

5) The student commits to become a student member of Finstat for the duration of his/her teacher training.

6) The student undertakes not to present him/herself/them as an Alexander Technique teacher and not to take payments from activities related to the Alexander Technique until he/she/they has received an official certificate of completion as an Alexander Technique teacher. After graduation, the student also receives a certificate from Finstat and can apply for teacher membership of the association.

Trial Period and Payments

1) The student's education begins on _____.

2) The first period is a trial period, during which both the trainers and the student can either individually or together cancel the contract, if in his/her/their opinion it is not profitable for the student to continue with the training.

3) Each period costs 2200 euros (incl. VAT 25,5%). In this scenario, the payment for the whole year is 8800 euros (incl. VAT 25,5%). The total price of the training is 26,400 euros (incl. VAT 25,5%).

4) Fees are to be paid in advance per period.
If the student faces an insurmountable obstacle in making payments on the due dates, he/she/they may be able to agree on an individual payment plan and subsequently will commit to complying with this plan.

Two (2) copies of this agreement will be made, one for the student, the other to be kept at the training course.

Date _____, dd/mm/yyyy.

Signatures:
Student

_____
(clarification of name)

Heads of Training

_____
Soile Lahdenperä and Katri-Mari Ruonala
Alexander Technique Helsinki OSK