

IPCAPA preclinical FAQ

1) INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

I am an international student from a European country - Am I eligible for a funded training post?

YES, but only if you have a pre-settle or settled status. With a fully settled status (indefinite leave to remain) students are eligible to apply for funded training posts and, once accepted onto the training, there will have access to the full funding from NHS England.

I am an international student from outside of Europe and/ or overseas - Am I eligible for a funded training post?

NO. As an international student from outside of Europe, you would need a valid visa to access this training and you would be required to self-fund during your training. For any further queries on visa and immigration matters, please contact the relevant team at UCL. There is a contact form on their website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/international/contact-us>

Who do I contact for advice on the visa requirements to access this course?

It's only our accrediting university (UCL) who sets the regulations in this regard. For any queries on visa and immigration matters, please contact the relevant team at UCL. There is a contact form on their website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/international/contact-us>

2) ACADEMIC PRE-CLINICAL PREREQUISITES

Where can I find the full list of prerequisites to be eligible to apply for the IPCAPA training?

[Standards for Entry into an ACP Accredited Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Clinical Training January 2022 .pdf \(childpsychotherapy.org.uk\)](#)

<https://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/IPCAPA%20pre%20training%20requirements%202020.pdf>

Why is preclinical training important?

- To develop an understanding of key psychoanalytic concepts such as the unconscious and its manifestations e.g. transference and counter transference
- To develop an observational and reflective stance
- To understand and explore one's suitability and inclination for psychoanalytic theory and practice (pre training personal analysis, although not compulsory, can contribute significantly to this)

What are the *academic* pre-clinical prerequisites for the IPCAPA training?

Essential preclinical studies include:

- Extended infant observation (2 years, available at the BPF) plus paper
- Work discussion seminars – once weekly for a minimum of 3 terms (available at the BPF) plus paper
- Psychoanalytic theory module (3 terms)
- Child development research module

How can I go about fulfilling all the academic preclinical prerequisites?

- Completing one of the ACP recognized Master courses which include all the necessary components “under one roof”: <https://childpsychotherapy.org.uk/training-events-0/pre-clinical-courses>).
- “Portfolio” pathway: enrolling onto a number of stand-alone courses that combined together enable students to fulfill all the academic prerequisites (theoretical and observation)

Do I need to have completed an Msc to be eligible to apply to the training?

Completing a master course is **not** the only viable pre-clinical route. Applicants will have carried out a course of study at a Masters level or equivalent comprising observation seminars and a taught theoretical component.

The most direct preclinical route to fulfil all academic prerequisites is completing one of the master courses listed on the ACP website (<https://childpsychotherapy.org.uk/training-events-0/pre-clinical-courses>). These courses include all necessary components “under one roof”

Applicants who have a 2.1 Honours degree (or equivalent) OR a Masters from a UK University in a relevant subject, can also fulfil the academic prerequisites by enrolling onto a number of courses that combined together would enable the student to fulfil the necessary theoretical and observation requirements.

For example, within the BPF, this can be achieved by enrolling onto the Foundation course - covering psychoanalytic and child development theory and work discussion seminars- and the infant observation course (2 years). You can learn more information on these courses and how to enrol on our website

<https://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/education/level/pre-qualification/>

Is there funding available for preclinical studies?

Preclinical studies are usually self-funded. We have a limited number of bursaries available to students from minority backgrounds and/ or experiencing financial difficulties and/or live in underserved regions of England. You can learn more information about the bursaries here.

[MSc In The Psychodynamics Of Human Development - The British Psychotherapy Foundation](#)

Here is more information about our commitment to diversity.

[Diversity Statement - The British Psychotherapy Foundation](#)

I don't have a 2.1 degree; can I still apply?

UCL requires applicants to the IPCAPA training to have a minimum of a 2:1 bachelor's degree. If you haven't obtained this, following your degree you will need to complete a master's course in a relevant subject.

3) WORK EXPERIENCE WITH CHILDREN

How much work experience with children do I need to be considered for the child training?

Prior to starting the child training, the ACP requires you to have had quite substantial work experience with children from 2 out of 3 age groups (Under 5s, latency and adolescents).

Remember: its more about the *quality* than the quantity of your work experience with children.

During selection, we explore to what extent you can reflect on and emotionally connect with your experiences working with children within a relevant psychoanalytic framework.

As an indication, the ACP recommends applicants have at least 500 hours of work experience across the ages.

Do I need *clinical* work experience with children?

NO.

It's less about your job title or the nature of the work setting, and more about having had the opportunity to work closely with the same children or families over a period of time and having had the opportunity to form and maintain meaningful relationships and reflect on these experiences over the course of your preclinical studies, as well as in supervision and personal analysis (if applicable).

People come into the child training having worked with babies, children, young people or families in a wide range of occupations and setting.

Experience of working with a clinical population or within a mental health setting, although helpful, is **not** essential.

Any role - even part time or in a voluntary capacity - across the health, education (including child-care) and social sectors would be suitable experience.

Do I need work experience in an NHS setting prior to applying for the child training?

NO.

CAMHS or other NHS experience is helpful but not essential. As well as your direct work with children and families, we are looking for candidates who have worked as part of a team as well as alongside other professionals, and who show an understanding of team dynamics and have had the opportunity to reflect upon these experiences in their preclinical learning. We value experience of working independently as well as part of a team, often within busy and changing environments.

4) INFANT OBSERVATION REQUIREMENTS

Why do I need to complete an Infant observation?

Infant observation is an essential part of pre-clinical learning. It is largely an experiential course that involves visiting and observing an infant in their home environment once a week for an hour for two years. This experience leads to invaluable learning in child development and early parent-infant relationships. It enables students to learn and experience key psychoanalytic concepts such as transference and countertransference and it promotes the development of a reflective, observational stance, which is the building block of any future psychoanalytically informed clinical work with children and adults.

How long should my Infant Observation be?

The requirement set by the ACP is to have observed an infant for 2 years, while attending recognised weekly infant observation seminars alongside.

Can I apply to IPCAPA if my Infant Observation is shorter than 2 years?

It is essential for all child training candidates to have had an opportunity to learn about the crucial developmental processes which unfold in the infant's first 2 years of life. Occasionally, we may accept a candidate who has not yet completed two full years of observation, due to reasons that are beyond their control. In some cases, where a prospective candidate is otherwise ready for training (emotionally and experience-wise), we may accept them onto the training with slightly less than two years of infant observation, and we may suggest that they complete their observation in the first term of year 1 of clinical training.

At what point during my Infant Observation am I eligible to apply for the IPCAPA training?

If you are on track with the rest of your preclinical training, you will be eligible to apply for the IPCAPA training one year into your infant observation (at the earliest and provided you have found an infant to observe by the end of the first term of infant observation seminars). This is because, if you apply at the point of having completed at least one year of an ongoing observation, by the time you are potentially accepted onto the training and ready to start Year 1, you will have had enough time to complete the second year of your observation.

If my infant observation finished after one year, do I need to start a new observation or can I do a 2nd year of observation with another infant/ family?

Ideally, the 2 years of Infant observation will have been carried out continuously with the same observation infant/ family. However, at times, prospective candidates will have come from a preclinical course that required them to complete only one year of observation. At other times, although there was a plan for the infant observation to last for 2 years, it may have come to an end prematurely for reasons that are beyond the student's control.

In such cases, we may advise that you extend your preclinical training to make the time to start and complete a new Infant observation experience, or we may suggest that you complete a second year of Infant Observation with a new infant/ family (while attending recognised infant observation seminars alongside). In the latter scenario, we may suggest looking for an older baby (1 year old) instead of a new born, in order to learn about the emotional and developmental processes unfolding in the second year of life.

We consider these scenarios on a "case by case" basis and considering the student's wider preclinical experience and overall readiness for clinical training.

5) Other FAQs

Do I need research experience to apply to the IPCAPA training?

Research experience is desirable but not essential. We accept applications from candidates with no prior experience of research. However, we are looking for candidates who display a keen interest in developing their research skills at a doctoral level and who show an understanding of how research contributes to clinical practice.

Do I need to be in personal therapy prior to starting the IPCAPA training?

No, experience of personal psychotherapy or psychoanalysis prior to starting the child training is no longer a compulsory prerequisite. However, we still strongly encourage prospective candidates to start personal therapy or analysis prior to training, whenever possible. We understand self-funding therapy or analysis is not a viable option for most people. As such, in order to widen the accessibility to the training, pre training analysis is no longer an essential prerequisite. We have a limited number of bursaries available to students from minority backgrounds and/ or experiencing financial difficulties.

Does my training analyst need to have ACP accreditation?

YES. At the point of starting the IPCAPA training, all trainees need to be in analysis (4 times per week) with an ACP accredited analyst who can commit to working with them through the duration of the clinical training. In you are in therapy or analysis during your preclinical training, it would be important to check if your current therapist/ analyst has ACP accreditation, and if they don't, whether they are eligible to apply for it

How do I check if my analyst has ACP accreditation?

you can ask your therapist or analyst directly about ACP accreditation. Alternatively, you can contact our course administrator at ipcapatraining@bpf-psychotherapy.org.uk to enquire about the ACP accreditation process or for help finding an accredited analyst.

Am I too old or too young to apply for the IPCAPA training?

NO, there are no age-related exclusion criteria. When evaluating our prospective candidates, we focus on understanding the candidates' unique journey into training, and assess their emotional readiness to deal with the demands of the training.

I have a disability and/ or Special Educational Needs. What support is available for IPCAPA trainees with additional needs?

Inclusivity is a core value of our teaching programme. We work closely with our trainees to understand their individual needs and make sure they receive adequate support throughout their training experience. As part of UCL, our trainees also have support to their Support and Wellbeing service: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing>

How competitive is the selection process onto IPCAPA once all preclinical prerequisites have been fulfilled?

The selection process is competitive, and successful candidates don't always get a place onto the training the first-time round. However, one of the important aspects of gathering preclinical studies and experience is that it enables prospective candidates to get a sense of their readiness for the training, and the correct timing of their application. As candidates progress in their studies, they usually get a good sense of how to prepare for selection and what to expect from the process

Once I complete preclinical training what can I expect from the selection process, if shortlisted?

The selection process may change slightly from year to year but it can be described as consisting of 2 main stages: one set of interviews with the IPCAPA staff, including an initial individual interview which may lead to further interviews and tasks. If successful through stage one, candidates are invited to a separate interview for the funded NHS training posts. The selection process takes place over a period of several months.

Here is the indicative (not exact) outline of the timeframe:

December/ January: application time —> if shortlisted, interviews for a place onto IPCAPA take place in February/ March —> if successful, NHS interviews for placements take place between April/ May

By early summer, the selection process is complete and incoming trainees are ready to start Year 1 of their training in September of the same year

Once selected onto the IPCAPA training, how many funded NHS placements are available each year?

NHS England offer the IPCAPA training school up to 25 fully funded trainee posts each year and we then work with NHS and third sector partners to establish settings which can provide the necessary clinical experience and high-quality supervisory support. However, the number and location of funded NHS training posts changes slightly from year to year, so it is not possible to put an exact number on the number of placements available until the later stages of the selection process. The majority of these placements are in inner and outer London, the South East and the South West of England, and as a training institution we are committed to extend training and provision of child and adolescent psychotherapists across the UK.