

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
- Please note that we expect all modules to be assessed and marked by the pre-clinical course and we will NOT ask you to submit any papers as part of the application process, but we will ask you to confirm that these modules have been passed and that work discussion and infant observation papers have been submitted as part of the pre-clinical course and received a pass.

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/>.
- 'Modular' pathway: enrolling onto a number of stand-alone courses that combined together enable students to fulfil 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's course is **not** the only viable pre-clinical route. Applicants will have carried out a course of study at a master's 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's 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 master's 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/>

If I am on the preclinical 'modular' pathway and I am only missing one module e.g. child development research module, do I need to complete a module on child development?

YES, you can enrol onto an individual module without completing the full course. For example, the Foundations course at the BPF allows preclinical students to enrol onto Individual modules without enrolling onto the whole course

<https://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/education/courses/foundation-course-psychotherapy-counselling/>

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](#)

Will completing all preclinical prerequisites guarantee a place onto the IPCAPA training?

Even when all the preclinical prerequisites have been fulfilled, we still assess each candidate individually and in conjunction with their overall experiences (personal and professional) and with their individual unique personal qualities and emotional readiness for training as evidenced in the personal statement and references.

Further, each application is considered in the context of what, each year, is a competitive field of candidates. This is why fulfilling the prerequisites does not guarantee a place on the training, and we always ultimately apply our discretion based on multiple factors.

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). However, given the competitive nature of the selection process and the large number of applicants to have each year, experience with all three age groups usually represents an advantage.

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 and social sectors would be suitable experience.

Clinical, mental health work experience is not mandatory, but it is preferable to have work experience in an allied field, over a considerable time, rather than many different work placements that are brief. This helps candidates understand and experience the changes over time that children can make. Further, it is important for your work experience to have taken place as part of a team and/ or working within an organisation. This way you can demonstrate your experience and understanding of the strengths and challenges of working in with team and organisational dynamics.

Do I have to have prior work experience with every age of child?

Although it is not mandatory for you to have work experience with all three age ranges of children, it may be that in a competitive field, candidates with experience of work with children and young people across the entire age range 0-25, may have an advantage.

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?

Two years of observation is mandatory. We recognise that there can be interruptions and delays to starting observation, so that infants are not always observed between the recommended age range of from (pre) birth until their 2nd birthday. However, we may, at our discretion and in conjunction with an overview of your entire application and experience, advise for this prerequisite to be fully completed before the training commences.

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. We understand it can take time to find an infant to observe once you start an Infant Observation course. As an indication, we would expect candidates to have started observing their infant **by the end of the first term of**

Infant Observation seminars, whenever possible, **and for 2-year observation to be completed by the summer term BEFORE they commence their clinical training.** Those candidates who experienced delays in finding an observation family past the first term of seminar may be advised to enrol onto additional infant observation seminars to complete their 2 years of observation. The extended Infant Observation seminars can usually be provided within the preclinical course.

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). 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 newborn, 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) PLACEMENTS

How many funded NHS training posts are there each year?

At the point of submitting your application, we do not yet know the exact funded NHS training post that will be available for the next training cohort, nor we know the exact locations of the placements. We usually offer more clarity on this by the spring prior to the new intake starting in October of that year. While an offer to be on our training does not guarantee one of the funded NHS training post, in the vast majority of cases all accepted candidates go on to secure a funded NHS training post for the whole duration of the four-year doctoral programme.

The majority of trainees are placed in a CAMHS NHS placement. However, in recent years some posts have also been created in third sector organisations that meet the requirements of the ACP standard for hosting a trainee CAPT, such as ensuring there is a Senior CAPT in post to supervise and support with case referrals and assessment.

Where are the funded NHS training posts?

We usually inform candidates of the location of available training posts by the spring prior to start of their training in the October of the same year. Each year we secure new training posts in a number of locations, including outside of London, while we also continue to place trainees within NHS placements with whom we have long standing relationships. We work in partnership with several NHS Trusts in and outside of London, including in the Southeast of England.

Can I choose my placement?

While your preferences are considered, trainees do not get to choose which training post they go to. The training council, in conjunction with NHS posts' supervisors, allocate the trainees to the available placements depending on a number of factors such as: performance at interview; relevance of experience that the trainee can bring to individual teams; trainees' professional interests and inclinations; trainee's geographical location and personal circumstances. While you cannot choose your placement, you can be assured that all IPCAPA training posts have been carefully selected as suitable training post because they can provide a rich and comprehensive training experience to the trainees that are placed with them.

Can I work part time?

You cannot work part time during your training. Once you start training, you will be employed by NHS England on a full time basis and be required to work in your clinic 4 days a week while one day a week (on Tuesdays) you will be attending your research and clinical seminars. We do not recommend that trainees attempt to carry out other jobs alongside their clinical training.

Can I set up my own training post?

If you have connections with ACP Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists working in a clinic where there currently is not a placement provision for trainee child and adolescent psychotherapists and would like to explore setting up a training post there, please contact the IPCAPA training coordinator to arrange an initial discussion with us. We would be happy to support you with this process. While most of our training posts are within NHS Trusts, where appropriate we can also set up shared placements within third sector organisations and local authorities.

6) 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.

Personal psychotherapy in the preclinical phase is not mandatory, however it is preferable and strongly recommended as an important developmental opportunity which supports a psychoanalytic approach to working with children and young people. Preclinical engagement with personal psychoanalysis prepares prospective CAPTs for subsequent training in which personal psychoanalysis is an essential component and can help candidates to make a more informed choice in committing to this programme and approach. When access to pre-clinical analysis is not possible, we expect candidates to show a sound understanding of why training analysis is such an important part of training as a CAPT and an ability to reflect on what being in analysis would mean to them and the possible challenges related to this.

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 looking for a therapist or analyst to commence personal therapy during your preclinical training, we would advise you choose a therapist or analyst who is on the BPC (British Psychoanalytic Council) register, as this means they will likely be eligible to apply for ACP accreditation should you wish to continue with them for your training analysis.

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.