Updated 2018

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

A-STEP

**Accredited
Sleep Technologist
Education Program**

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine developed the Accredited Sleep Technologist Education Program (A-STEP) to help standardize training and education for those interested in the field of sleep medicine. A-STEP equips trainees and technicians with the education needed to excel as a sleep technologist.

AASM Accredited Sleep Facilities or Academic Institutions affiliated with an AASM Accredited Sleep Facility can become an A-STEP Introductory Course Provider to offer the 80-Hour Introductory Course to sleep trainees and technicians. This in-person course consists of 80 hours of instruction and training about sleep, sleep disorders, sleep studies and patient care. It concludes with an online examination.

A-STEP Introductory Course Providers have proven compliance with the A-STEP Standards for Accreditation, which address specific personnel, curriculum, assessment and policy qualifications.

The standards in this document define the minimum requirements for A-STEP Introductory Course Providers.

Every A-STEP Introductory Course Provider has the responsibility to meet all federal, state and local regulations pertaining to educational programs.

Accepted applicants that meet all standards will be granted the status of A-STEP Introductory Course Provider for a period of two years.

Adopted by the Board of Directors in July, 2005 | Revised Jan. 2018

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PERSONNEL

Adequate personnel is critical to A-STEP. The Program Director coordinates and manages the 80-Hour Introductory Course offering. An experienced Registered Sleep Technologist (RST) or Registered Polysomnographic Technologist (RPSGT) provides insight into the role of the technologist in the sleep disorders program, the knowledge base necessary to successfully pass the American Board of Sleep Medicine (ABSM) or Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists (BRPT) registry examinations, and a model for the participant. The role of the Clinical Director is to communicate the needs of the potential employer and to provide an overview of sleep medicine. The number and expertise of the remainder of the faculty should reflect the need to provide eight hours of instruction per day to the participants. Faculty will be required to provide didactic training as well as "hands-on" experience with a faculty-to-student ratio that optimizes training.

Standard 1.   Each program must have a Program Director who is a RST, RPSGT or a Board Certified Sleep Specialist (BCSS).

Standard 2.   Each program must have a Clinical Director who is a BCSS. This individual may also fill the role of Program Director. The Clinical Director will communicate the needs of the potential employer and provide an overview of sleep medicine.

Standard 3.   Each program must have a Technical Director who is a RST or RPSGT. This individual may also fill the role of Program Director.

Standard 4.   Each program must have adequate faculty chosen by the Program Director to provide didactic and practical instruction to the students in the program.

RESOURCES

The students must have sufficient instructional resources to become familiar with the knowledge base relevant to sleep medicine as well as the work environment. Accredited Sleep Facilities meet high standards for patient care; an affiliation with an Accredited Sleep Facility is required. Students must have access to the equipment required to perform polysomnography and positive airway pressure titration. A program with fewer than four students may provide the 80-Hour Introductory Course instruction in an office or small conference room, whereas a larger program must have a classroom. Programs must provide a library of instructional materials for students. Reference materials are essential, but other resources provide an excellent supplement to lectures.

Standard 5. Each program must be associated with a comprehensive sleep disorders center accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).

Standard 6. Programs must have access to polysomnographic recording and treatment equipment used routinely by sleep technologists.

Standard 7. Programs with more than four students must have a classroom for didactic instruction.

Standard 8. Programs must have a library that includes, at a minimum, copies of the International Classification of Sleep Disorders Second Edition; Clinical Practice Parameters of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine; The AASM Manual for the Scoring of Sleep and Associated Events: Rules, Terminology and Technical Specification; and CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer by the American Red Cross.

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CURRICULUM

Minimum curriculum requirements are defined here. A-STEP Introductory Course Providers are encouraged to review the sample curriculum developed by the Sleep Technologist Issues Committee of the AASM. Additional resources include the Curriculum Outline provided by the American Association of Sleep Technologists (AAST) as well as the Registered Polysomnographic Technologist Examination Content Outline provided by the BRPT.

Standard 9.   The program must include a minimum of eighty (80) hours of instruction. It is recommended that this instruction be continuous and it must not extend beyond an eight (8) week period.

Standard 10.   The program curriculum must include an introduction to the history of sleep and an overview of sleep disorders and sleep medicine.

Standard 11.   The program curriculum must include a basic understanding of the nervous, respiratory, skeletal and cardiovascular systems.

Standard 12.   The program curriculum must include training in patient safety incorporating infection control techniques, fall precautions and recognizing emergencies.

Standard 13.   The program curriculum must include training in obtaining patient histories, interpersonal communication and management of the difficult patient.

Standard 14.   The program curriculum must include training in patient confidentiality, informed consent, and discussion of HIPAA regulations.

Standard 15.   The program must include instruction in preparation of the patient and equipment for polysomnography.

Standard 16.   The program curriculum must introduce the student to polysomnographic recording, treatment equipment and electrical safety.

Standard 17.   The program curriculum must introduce the student to sleep stage scoring and polysomnographic event detection.

Standard 18.   The program must instruct the student in standard polysomnographic procedures, including the Multiple Sleep Latency Test and Maintenance of Wakefulness Test.

Standard 19.   The program curriculum must include instruction in the application of positive airway pressure and supplemental oxygen as well as discussion of nocturnal ventilation.

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ONLINE LEARNING

A-STEP Introductory Course Providers may choose to provide a portion of the 80-Hour Introductory Course online. The online portion of the training must comply with the following standard.

Standard 20.   **Programs may include an online portion as a percentage of their 80 hours of training. The online portion must meet the following requirements:**

- **Online learning may not make up more than 30% of the introductory course curriculum.**
- **Topics requiring hands-on learning and practical experience cannot be dealt with exclusively by an online approach. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:**
  a. **10-20 System**
  b. **Electrode Application**
  c. **Sleep Staging**
  d. **Electrocardiography**
  e. **Monitoring Airflow and Respiratory Effort**
  f. **Oxygen Saturation and Carbon Dioxide Monitoring**
  g. **Scoring Respiratory Events**
  h. **PAP Titration**
  i. **Recording and Scoring Limb Movements**
  j. **Polysomnogram Report**
  k. **MSLT and MWT**
  l. **Artifact Recognition and Troubleshooting**
  m. **Pediatric Polysomnography**
- **Content and presentation of online material must be suitable for an entry level student**
- **Quality and organization of online material must be appropriate for self-learning. There must be no need for supplementation by faculty other than access for questions. The use of interactive materials (i.e. videos, webinars, written materials) is strongly encouraged.**
- **Provisions must be in place for learners to have timely access to faculty for questions regarding the online learning materials.**

Note: Applications for online learning are subject to review by the Sleep Technologist Issues Committee.

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ASSESSMENT

Each program is expected to evolve through a process of self-assessment and quality assurance. This requires evaluation of participant and program performance. Adequate records must be kept to facilitate this task. 80-Hour Introductory Courses must use objective measures as markers of success to aid in refinement and improvement of the training provided. Programs should strive for a high rate of passage on the standardized trainee examination (80-Hour Introductory Final Exam). Other markers of success include reports from students that they felt prepared to begin work and reports from employers that the students were adequately prepared to be effective in the workplace.

Standard 21.   The program must provide students with an evaluation at the midpoint of the program that allows for correction of deficiencies in knowledge.

Standard 22.   The program must maintain records of student performance and attendance.

Standard 23.   The program must maintain objective measures of success, including but not limited to:
- Performance of students on standardized sleep technology trainee tests
- Student assessments of the program and how well they were prepared for work
- Employer assessments of student proficiency

MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A-STEP Introductory Course Providers must ensure that applicants are high school graduates and meet minimum standards for employment as a Polysomnographic Trainee.

Standard 24.   Programs must require that students complete a high school education prior to beginning the program.

Standard 25.   Programs must require that students are able to perform the duties specified in the AASM/AAST/BRPT/ABSM job description for a Polysomnographic Trainee.

FAIR PRACTICES

A-STEP Introductory Course Providers must not engage in false or misleading advertisements. Policies and procedures must be available for review, and the program must make every effort to treat participants and employees in a fair manner. Any A-STEP Introductory Course Provider that loses its Program or Clinical Director, changes the curriculum so that essential elements are no longer part of the training, or fails to maintain compliance with all of the Standards for Accreditation must report the change to the AASM office in a timely fashion.

Standard 26.   **Announcements, catalogs, publications and advertising must accurately reflect the program offered.**

Standard 27.   **The policies and procedures of the program must be available to prospective students.**

Standard 28.   **The program must have a student grievance procedure.**

Standard 29.   **The program must follow federal, state and local guidelines regarding student and faculty recruitment and employment practices.**

Standard 30.   **The program must report changes in resources, curriculum or key personnel to the AASM within 90 days when they impact compliance with these standards.**

Developed and operated by:

AASM American Academy *of* SLEEP MEDICINE™