

**ACCREDITED SLEEP
TECHNOLOGIST TRAINING**
IN LOCAL SLEEP CENTERS & CLASSROOMS

STANDARDS FOR

A • STEP ACCREDITATION

ACCREDITED SLEEP TECHNOLOGIST EDUCATION PROGRAM A • STEP



AASM SLEEP EDUCATION SERIES

Standards For A•STEP Accreditation



The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has recognized a growing commitment to the standardized education and training of sleep technologists. A-STEP, the Accredited Sleep Technologist Education Program, is a two-step program that includes an 80-hour didactic course (AASMA-STEP Introductory Course) in an AASM accredited sleep center or affiliated academic institution, and an e-learning program (AASM A-STEP Self-Study Modules) through the AASM website, while the tech completes 18 months of on-the-job training provided by their employer.

These standards define the minimum requirements for AASM A-STEP accreditation. Duration of accreditation is two years.

Every accredited program has the responsibility to meet all federal, state and local regulations pertaining to educational programs.

Adopted by the Board of Directors in July, 2005
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American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Personnel

Adequate personnel is critical to A-STEP. The A-STEP Program Director coordinates and manages the AASM A-STEP Introductory Course offering. An experienced registered sleep technologist (RST or RPSGT) provides insight into the role of the technologist in the sleep disorders program, the knowledge base necessary to successfully pass the RST or BRPT registry examinations, and a model for the participant. The role of the A-STEP 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 Registered Sleep Technologist (RST), RPSGT or a Board Certified Sleep Specialist.
- Standard 2.** Each program must have a Clinical Director who is a Board Certified Sleep Specialist. 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 Registered Sleep Technologist (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 A-STEP Student must have sufficient instructional resources to become familiar with the knowledge base relevant to sleep medicine as well as the work environment. Accredited sleep disorders centers meet high standards for patient care; an affiliation with an accredited sleep center is required. Students must have access to the equipment required to perform polysomnography and positive airway pressure titration. An A-STEP program with fewer than four students may provide AASM A-STEP Introductory Course instruction in an office or small conference room, whereas a larger A-STEP program must have a classroom. A-STEP courses 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.
- 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.

Curriculum

Minimum curriculum requirements are defined here. A-STEP Providers are encouraged to review the sample curriculum developed by the Sleep Technologist Issues Committee of the AASM.

- Standard 9.** The program must include a minimum of eighty (80) hours of instruction. It is recommended that this instruction be continuous, emphasize hands on learning 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 as pertains to sleep disorders.
- 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 impart a basic understanding of involvement in quality improvement to enhance patient quality and safety in the future.
- Standard 14.** The program curriculum must include training in obtaining patient histories, interpersonal communication and management of the challenging patient.
- Standard 15.** The program curriculum must include training in patient confidentiality, informed consent, and discussion of HIPAA regulations.
- Standard 16.** The program curriculum must include awareness on the use of sleep questionnaires.
- Standards 17.** The program curriculum must include indications for sleep diaries and actigraphy.
- Standard 18.** The program curriculum must include a basic understanding on the effects of common medications on sleep.
- Standard 19.** The program must include instruction in preparation of the patient and equipment for polysomnography.
- Standard 20.** The program must include instruction in preparation of the patient and equipment for out of center sleep testing.
- Standard 21.** The program curriculum must introduce the student to polysomnographic recording, treatment equipment and electrical safety.
- Standard 22.** The program curriculum must introduce the student to sleep stage scoring and polysomnographic event detection.

Curriculum

- Standard 23. The program must instruct the student in standard polysomnographic procedures, including the Multiple Sleep Latency Test and Maintenance of Wakefulness Test.
- Standard 24. The program curriculum must include instruction in the application of positive airway pressure and supplemental oxygen as well as discussion of nocturnal ventilation.
- Standard 25. The program curriculum must include instruction in the application of all available therapies for sleep related breathing disorders (i.e. PAP, Titration of Oral Appliance, ASV, AVAPS and other approved treatment modalities)

Online Learning

A-STEP 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 26. 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

Assessment

Each A-STEP 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. A-STEP Introductory Courses must use objective measures as markers of success to aid in refinement and improvement of the training provided. A-STEP programs should strive for a high rate of passage on the standardized trainee examination (Introductory Course Final Examination). 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 27. **The program must provide students with an evaluation at the midpoint of the program that allows for correction of deficiencies in knowledge.**

Standard 28. **The program must maintain records of student performance and attendance.**

Standard 29. **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 Requirements

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

- Standard 30.** Programs must require that students complete a high school education or have received a GED prior to beginning the program.
- Standard 31.** Programs must require that students are able to perform the duties specified in the job description for a Polysomnographic Trainee (www.aastweb.org/JobDescriptions.aspx).

Fair Practices

A-STEP Providers must not engage in false or misleading advertisements. Policies and procedures must be available for review, and the A-STEP program must make every effort to treat participants and employees in a fair manner. Any A-STEP 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 must report the change to the AASM office in a timely fashion.

- Standard 32.** Announcements, catalogs, publications and advertising must accurately reflect the program offered.
- Standard 33.** The policies and procedures of the program must be available to prospective students.
- Standard 34.** The program must have a student grievance procedure.
- Standard 35.** The program must follow federal, state and local guidelines regarding student and faculty recruitment and employment practices.
- Standard 36.** The program must report changes in resources, curriculum or key personnel to the AASM within 90 days when they impact compliance with these standards.