

**July.1 2007 version**  
**ASSERT NATIONAL**  
**Professional Member – Sexuality Therapist**

A Sexuality Therapist is a person with the following qualifications and characteristics.

The applicant must provide documentation to show competency in each of the three qualification areas outlined.

**1. Professional qualification/s**

**1.1**

A degree from a recognized university in Australia as listed in the Australian Qualifications Framework, register of recognized institutions (<http://www.aqf.edu.au/register.htm>) or from an international institution listed in the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) register (<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Individual/Migrant/NationalOfficeofOverseasSkillsRecognitionNOOSR.htm>).

It is important that the institution or university have a recognized code of ethics to which the candidate is bound. The ethics statement should be accessible to the accreditation committee

The degree will be in an area related to sexuality and/or sexual health with at least 60 hours (6 - credit point equivalent) of course content in sexuality and sexual health related content.

The content should include at least 80% of the following core areas:

- An overview of the discipline of sexology including knowledge of traditional and contemporary models and concepts in sexuality therapy.
- Sexual anatomy and physiology, and the sexual response cycle
- Developmental sexuality across the lifespan, from a psychosocial-biological perspective
- Dynamics of interpersonal and sexual relationships from balanced and creative, to patterns with power imbalances and dysfunction
- Sexual function and dysfunction, and sexual pleasure and factors affecting it:
  - aetiology for individuals and couples sexual function/dysfunction
  - biological factors for example medical including illness, disability, drugs, pregnancy, pregnancy termination, contraception, fertility and trauma including sexual assault and rape
  - psychosocial factors for example enrichment of the intimate and sexual relationship, desire discrepancy for couples, concerns unique to women such as vaginismus and unique to men such as erectile difficulties
  - emerging issues including cybersex, sexual compulsivity, polyamory, fetishes and bondage, submission and sado masochism (BDSM)

- Gender-related issues including sexual orientation and gender identities
- Socio-cultural and spiritual factors in sexual values and behaviour
- Sexually transmitted infections and safer sex practices
- Sexual rights and reproductive rights.
- Sexual abuse and laws related to sexuality/forensic sexology
- Ethical and professional issues
- Knowledge of resources for the sexuality therapist

## 1.2

Completion of specialised post-graduate training as a therapist either within a recognised institution (see 1.1) or acceptable setting that provides both theory and supervised practice. Such training may have focus on therapy with individuals, couples and/or families and be received from community agencies that have accredited training programs. These programs should have minimum of 100 hours of formal training.

## 2. ASSERT National Code of Ethics

The applicant will have read the ASSERT National Code of Ethics. By signing the certification application form, the applicant agrees to be bound by the ASSERT National Code of Ethics.

## 3. Professional training documentation in sexuality therapy

The applicant must show a minimum of 200 hours worked in supervised sexuality therapy. This is to be made up from a minimum 7 hours per week of supervised work and one hour per week individual supervision by an ASSERT National accredited/approved sexuality therapist/supervisor over a 12 month period.

The following would be considered examples of acceptable supervised training:

- Sexuality therapy under the supervision of an ASSERT National accredited sexuality therapist or equivalent, in a recognised agency, such as a Sexual Health Centre, Relationships Australia or Family Planning Organisation.
- Student sexuality therapist practicum semesters, as part of a sexology degree, or degree related to human sexuality or sex therapy, taught and/or supervised by an ASSERT National accredited sexuality therapist (or equivalent) will also be considered supervised training.

## 4. Professional Member - Sexuality Therapist - Special Circumstances

The accreditation committee of ASSERT National recognizes that there are many members with extensive experience in sexuality therapy who have not had the opportunity of a formal qualification in the area. The committee will consider these applications individually under this 'special circumstances category'.

Special circumstances could include specialization in one or limited areas of sexuality therapy.

The ASSERT National Accreditation Committee will review the documentation of education and work experience of the applicant.

International applicants must show evidence of equivalent training and professional experience.

**Documentation:**

The following documentation must be submitted to the ASSERT National Sexuality Therapist Accreditation Committee:

1. Completed formal application for ASSERT National Sexuality Therapist, signed and dated.
2. Official transcripts of program(s) in which degree(s)/diploma(s) were earned.
3. Official documentation of 60 hours of education in the designated core areas of human sexuality. Documentation must include the dates, sponsors, faculty, and content of the educational experience, signed by at least one supervisor/faculty member, certificates of attendance, in-service program or continuing education certificates, or other credible evidence.
4. Official documentation of 200 hours in the theory and supervised practice in sexuality therapy. Documentation must include dates, training facility and content of the specialist training signed by at least one supervisor. It should also include names of supervisors, certificates, letters of recommendation, or other credible evidence.
5. Statement of philosophy of sexuality therapy.
6. A nomination signature from an ASSERT National Sexuality Therapist, supporting the application.
8. Copy of current professional insurance.
9. The processing fee of \$50.00 AUD.

**5. Professional Membership**

Upon approval of application for Professional Membership as a Sexuality Therapist by the ASSERT National Accreditation Committee, the successful applicant will receive a certificate in recognition of having met the ASSERT National requirements for certification in the area of sexuality therapy. This certificate will be subject to renewal every 3 years. In addition, Professional Membership of ASSERT National must be maintained on an annual basis to retain/maintain the ASSERT Sexuality Therapist status. If membership lapses, certification will also lapse.

## **6. Professional Membership - Special Circumstances Category**

For those applicants being considered under the Special Circumstances Category, the ASSERT National Accreditation Committee will clearly indicate where the applicant has met the required criteria for Sexuality Therapist. The ASSERT National Committee will also indicate where there are unmet criteria and make clear recommendations of how these can be met within a practical time frame and with the support from ASSERT National at the local, state or national levels.

## **7. Maintaining professional standards as a Sexuality Therapist**

Once accredited, the Sexuality Therapist will establish ongoing clinical consultations, ideally with an ASSERT National accredited Sexuality Therapist or equivalent. Such consultations may also be with a small peer group focused on sexuality therapy depending on the resources available. Such consultations would be on a monthly basis, or more frequent, as the need arises.

The purpose of such consultations would be to provide relevant specialist support and clinical input for casework and maintain a high standard of knowledge, competencies and self-awareness. The Sexuality Therapist needs to keep informed of new developments in sexual, individual and couple therapy and research. Ethical issues and standards also need to be considered and maintained.

The accredited Sexuality Therapist will make a reasonable effort to attend ASSERT National conferences and meetings as well as their state organised continuing education program.

Participation in the above processes with relevant documentation ensures ongoing membership of ASSERT National as a Sexuality Therapist.